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THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON:

AN HISTORICAL MEMOIR.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. J. MITCHELL, H.P.,

Author of "The Life of Wallenstein;" "Thoughts on Tactics," &c., &c.

THAT WHOLE NATIONS BELIEVE, IS NO EVIDENCE OF TRUTH.

Jacobus Dush.

VOLUME SECOND.

LONDON:

G. W. NICKISSON, 215, REGENT STREET.

M.DCCC.XLV.

141873

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THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON.

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"If the Allies are not now sincere in their desire for peace," said Napoleon, as he turned his horse's head towards Dresden after ratifying the convention of Neumark, "this armistice may prove very fatal to our cause." The assertion was perfectly just: and it seems strange to find him so fully alive to the danger of his position, and so totally wanting in that moderation which could alone avert the threatened peril, and prevent the necessity for a renewed appeal to arms. On the part of the Allies, the sincere desire for peace could

not be doubted: their ravaged lands, bleeding and exhausted countries, proclaimed the desire in notes of suffering from the Rhine to the Moskwa, and from the Pyrenees to the Tagus; and even the nations who had only heard the thunder from afar, had seen their industry checked, their treasures wasted, and their children sent forth to perish on distant battle-fields in an interminable contest. Victorious Britain, whose military and commercial fleets covered the ocean, and whose armies were triumphant in every quarter of the globe, called aloud for peace; and France, adorned with the spoils of all the capitals of continental Europe, mourned in silence the loss of so many valiant men slain in endless battles, and sighed for repose and tranquillity. No voice of open remonstrance dared indeed address itself to Napoleon; but he was not ignorant of the wishes of his people, and was himself as sincerely desirous of peace as his enemies.

On the 30th of June, he thus writes to the Arch-Chancellor Cambacères: "All this ministerial talking about peace is extremely injurious to my affairs; for every thing becomes public; and I have seen more than twenty letters from foreign ministers, all reporting to their courts that the Parisians desire peace at any price, and that ministers inform me of this every day. And this tends exactly to render peace impossible. It would be far better to assume a warlike tone; for it is a very mistaken idea to suppose that peace depends exclusively upon me: the demands of the enemies are exorbitant." This was far from being the case; but Napoleon possessed neither the moderation nor the sense of what was justly due to the claims of other nations, which could enable him to take a proper view of his own position. The only peace of which the Allies

could be desirous, was one that should bring relief from foreign oppression, and give them security against a renewal of the insults and injuries so long and so recklessly offered. The only peace Napoleon was willing to grant, was one that should still leave him the Dictator of Europe. And so convinced were the English government of his overbearing disposition, that they objected, in the first instance, to take any share in the proposed negotiations.

Austria, availing herself after the Russian campaign of the advantages of her position, had skilfully extricated herself from the trammels of the French alliance, and offered her mediation to the contending parties; and as she continued to arm, the offer gradually assumed the shape of an armed interference. Hateful as this proceeding was to Napoleon, and galling as it was to his pride to find the nation he had so long trampled upon speaking in an independent tone, and assuming, above all, a defensive posture, he deemed it, nevertheless, expedient to submit: intending, however, as we shall see, to act a deeply treacherous part towards the mediating power. As the negotiations proceeded very slowly, Count Metternich, then looked upon as the principal adherent of the French alliance in the cabinet of Vienna, was sent to Dresden to communicate personally with Napoleon. The conversation which passed between him and the Emperor is too characteristic of the latter to be here passed over. "You are welcome, Metternich," he said, when the ambassador was introduced; "but wherefore so late? we have lost nearly a month: and your mediation, from its long inactivity, has become almost hostile." Warming as he spoke, he intimated that the Austrian minister staid away, perhaps in order that France might be reduced to a

lower state than at the opening of the campaign; while now that he had gained two battles, Austria thrust in her mediation to prevent him from following up his success. In claiming to be a negotiator, Austria, he said, was neither his friend nor his impartial judge—she was his enemy. "You were about to declare yourselves," he continued, "when the victory at Lützen rendered it prudent, in the first place, to assemble more forces. Now you have collected 200,000 men, under Prince Schwarzenberg, behind the skreen of the Bohemian mountains. Ah, Metternich! I guess the purpose of your cabinet. You wish to profit by my embarrassments, and seize on the favourable moment to regain as much as you can of what I have taken from you. The only question with you is, whether you will make most by allowing me to ransom myself, or by going to war with me? You are uncertain on that point; and perhaps you only come here to ascertain which is your best course. Well, let us drive a bargain: how much is it you want?"

To this insulting commencement, Metternich replied, that "the only advantage desired by his master, was to see that moderation and respect for the rights of nations which filled his own bosom restored to the general councils of Europe, and such a well balanced system introduced as should place universal tranquillity under the guarantee of an association of independent states."

Napoleon affected to treat this as a figure of speech, which was to cloak the private views of Austria. "I speak clearly," he said, "and come to the point. Will it suit you to accept of Illyria, and to remain neutral? Your neutrality is all I require. I can deal with the Russians and Prussians myself."

"Ah! Sire," replied Metternich, "it depends solely

on your Majesty to unite all our forces with yours. But the truth must be told. Matters have come to such an extremity, that Austria cannot remain neutral. We must be with you or against you."

"Well, then, what do you want?" inquired the Emperor, interrupting him.

Thus called upon, the Austrian endeavoured to show that a General Congress could alone undertake the settlement of the principal European questions: adding, that the existing constitution of the French empire, extending from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and exercising a protectorate rule over Germany and a mediating sovereignty over Switzerland, presented serious obstacles to the restoration of a just balance of power.

"What!" exclaimed Napoleon in a loud voice, "not only Illyria, but half of Italy, the restoration of the Pope, and the abandonment of Poland; the resignation of Spain, Holland, Switzerland, and the Confederation of the Rhine! Is this your moderation? You hawk about your alliance from the one camp to the other, where the greatest partition of territory is to be obtained, and then you talk of the independence of nations! In plain truth, *you* would have Italy; Sweden demands Norway; Prussia requires Saxony; England would have Holland and Belgium,—you would dismember the French empire; and all these changes to be operated by Austria's mere threat of going to war. Can you pretend to win, by a single stroke of the pen, so many of the strongest fortresses in Europe, the keys of which I have gained by battles and victories? And think you, that I will be so docile as to march back my soldiers, with their arms reversed, over the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees; and by subscribing a treaty, which is one vast capitulation, deliver myself, like a fool, into the

hands of my enemies, and trust to their generosity for a doubtful permission to exist? Is it when my army is triumphing at the gates of Berlin and Breslau, that Austria hopes to extort such a cession from me, without striking a blow or drawing a sword? It is an affront to expect it: and is it my father-in-law who entertains such a project? Is it he who sends you to me? In what attitude would he place me before the eyes of the French people? He is in a strange mistake, if he supposes that a mutilated throne in France can afford shelter to his daughter and his grandson. Ah, Metternich!" he concluded, "how much has England given you, to make you act this part towards me?"

The Austrian minister disdaining to defend himself against so coarse an accusation, only replied by a look of scorn and resentment. A profound silence ensued, during which Napoleon and Metternich traversed the apartment with long steps, without looking at each other. The Emperor dropt his hat, perhaps to give a turn to this awkward situation. But Metternich was too deeply affronted for any office of courtesy; and the dictator of kings was obliged to kick it aside, and resume the discourse in a more temperate strain. He did not yet, he said, despair of peace, and offered to add part of Poland to the Illyrian provinces already tendered. He flattered and threatened by turns, and used all the arts of persuasion he could command; but all in vain: the Austrian constantly returned to the armed mediation already accepted by Russia and Prussia, and to which Napoleon also ended by consenting, after the stormy conference had lasted several hours, and completely exhausted both the debating parties. On the 30th of June the French Emperor signed the hated treaty of mediation, by which it was agreed that a Congress

should be assembled at Prague, to negotiate a Continental peace, under the armed auspices of the very power on which the campaigns of Wagram and Austerlitz had once imposed such humiliating terms. On the 1st of July, the very day after this convention was signed, the news of the battle of Vittoria reached Dresden.

The Duke of Wellington had equipped and refreshed his army in winter quarters after the fatigues of the Burgos campaign; but had again resumed offensive operations on the return of spring. By a sudden march to the north, he threw the principal part of his forces across the Douro, within the Portuguese frontier; and thus turned the enemy's defences behind that river, before they were even aware that his army was in motion. The advance was continued with great rapidity; and the French, unwilling to risk a general action for the protection of Burgos, blew up the castle, and retired behind the Ebro. They were quickly followed by the pursuers; and having taken up a position in front of Vittoria, were there attacked on the morning of the 21st of June, and completely routed, with the loss of all their guns, stores, treasures, baggage, and ammunition of every kind. The booty that fell into the hands of the victors far exceeded any ever taken in a modern battle-field. The spoils of a whole kingdom, which for five years had been systematically plundered, was assembled at Vittoria, and captured in one day. Besides five and a half millions of dollars in the military chest, the private booty taken was prodigious. Rich vestures of all sorts, velvet and silk brocades, gold and silver plate, noble pictures, jewels, laces, cases of claret and champaign, poodles, parrots, and trinkets, were found scattered about the field in endless profusion.

In a military as well as in a political point of view, the battle of Vittoria was one of the most decisive

actions fought during the war. It liberated long-suffering Spain at a single blow; inflicted a deep wound on the reputation of the French arms at an important moment; its echos reverberated over Germany, dispelled whatever gloom the reverses of Lützen and Bautzen had cast upon the spirit of the land, and kindled high the patriot zeal of its soldiers, who with loud huzzas received the gallant tidings, and promised soon to equal the deeds of their victorious Allies. It was this splendid achievement which first confirmed the wavering hopes of all the nations contending for freedom and independence against the oppressive power of Napoleon, and thus proved one of the most severe shocks his tyranny had yet experienced.

How severely he felt the disaster of Vittoria—how anxious he was to prevent its being known—may be conjectured from the fact, that he sent immediate orders to detain at Bayonne, not only the officers, ministers, and high dignitaries who had returned from Spain, but King Joseph himself. And so positive was the order, that the minister of police was authorised to use force: even against the Emperor's own brother if necessary. At the same time, Marshal Soult, one of the most distinguished French officers, was despatched with all speed to assume the command of the vanquished army, and restore if possible the imperial fortunes beyond the Pyrenees.

But conscious as Napoleon must have been, how greatly the defeat of Vittoria would already injure his position at the approaching Congress, he still seems to have used his best efforts to render it even worse: for duplicity marked his conduct from the very outset. Though the Ambassadors of the different powers were to assemble at Prague on the 5th July, or "earlier if

possible," the French Commissioners, who were within a few hours' journey of the Bohemian capital, did not arrive till the 25th,—alleging, as an excuse for the delay, that their duties as officers of the palace had prevented their earlier attendance. Nor was this strange and unaccountable piece of affectation the worst part of Napoleon's conduct on this memorable occasion. His secret instructions to Caulincourt Duke of Vicenza and Count Narbonne were,—not to negotiate a general peace, but a separate treaty between France and Russia, which should leave Austria entirely at his mercy. "It is the Emperor's intention," say these instructions, "to conclude a peace with Russia, in every respect glorious to that power, which shall deprive Austria of all influence in Europe, as a reward for the false policy which has made her abandon the French alliance. It is for the interest of France to prevent Austria from gaining a single village. Influenced by these motives, the Emperor wishes to place himself in such a situation as to prevent the possibility of his having any future dispute with Russia."

Were it not attested beyond the possibility of doubt, posterity would hardly credit the fact, that the period fixed upon for giving peace to Europe was wasted in endless disputes about the mode of conducting the negotiation! Metternich proposed, and with great sagacity as the document just quoted evidently proves, that the commissioners should hold no direct intercourse with each other, but should negotiate through the medium of the mediating power. Besides the passage already mentioned, Napoleon's farther instructions to Caulincourt were actually commands to delay the negotiations, and evade an early settlement of the difficulties. "In general," says this extraordinary document, "the

negotiation can proceed but slowly: the moment of the real negotiations will only commence within ten or twelve days of the time fixed for their termination. Till then, the commissioners must hold out, and observe great caution. Farther orders for their guidance will then be received; but these are not to be expected till the negotiations have passed through their first period, and begin to draw towards a close."

Metternich, well aware of the parties he had to deal with, was fully prepared for such procrastination. At the first interview, he said to Caulincourt, the French commissioner, "I foresee great difficulties and delays. Perhaps we may not learn the Emperor Napoleon's real intention till the 10th of August,"—the day fixed for the termination of the armistice,—"and as that intention will then be peace or war, I hope the genius of his Majesty will even then suggest the means of settling all differences."

It is very evident that Napoleon had calculated on being able to rekindle, during the negotiation, the personal friendship he believed the Emperor Alexander had formerly entertained for him, and thus to separate Russia from the alliance; and it was obviously in this expectation that the instructions to Caulincourt were framed. The Czar, however, true to the cause in which he was engaged, and wishing perhaps to avoid the possibility of exciting suspicion on the part of the other powers, declined all direct communication with the French commissioners. Frustrated in one quarter, Napoleon attempted to open a secret negotiation with his father-in-law; hoping, no doubt, that the paternal feelings of the Emperor Francis would induce him to take part with the husband of his daughter.

On the 6th of August, only four days before the ter-

mination of the armistice, Caulincourt told Metternich, that he had a private letter for the Emperor of Austria; and was instructed to apply in a confidential and not official manner, and unknown even to his colleague, Count Narbonne, to learn on what terms Austria was desirous that peace should be concluded; and if in case France agreed to those terms, that power would join her, or remain neutral. To this Metternich replied, that "it was much to be regretted the Emperor Napoleon had not thought proper to make this proposal on the first arrival of the Duke of Vicenza, as there would then have been time for coming to an understanding with Russia and Prussia, whereas they had now only three days left. It would also," the Austrian minister thought, "have been simpler, if the Emperor had proposed the terms to which he was willing to accede. Caulincourt maintained, however, that the question was as simple as possible, as the Austrian cabinet could hardly fail to know what were the terms it would *not* support."

Though this attempt to open an underhand negotiation with Austria also failed, the terms of the mediating power, already agreed to by Russia and Prussia, were on the very next day submitted to the French commissioners. They were as follows:—I. The dissolution of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was to be divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. II. The re-establishment of the Hanseatic towns in their former independence. III. The reconstruction of Prussia, assigning to that kingdom a frontier on the Elbe. IV. The cession to Austria of the maritime town of Trieste, with the Illyrian provinces. The emancipation of Spain and Holland, as matters in which England, no party to the Congress, took a chief interest, was not stirred

for the present, but reserved for consideration at the general peace. A concluding article stipulated, that the condition of the European powers, great and small, once settled at the Congress, should be guaranteed to all and each of them, and not innovated upon except by general consent.

This still left France in possession of Italy, Switzerland, Flanders, the left bank of the Rhine, the kingdom of Westphalia; nor did it interfere with Napoleon's Protectorate of the German Confederation: but the most extensive empire ever known to Europe,—dominions far exceeding those over which Charlemagne had ruled, were not deemed sufficient by Napoleon. Nor indeed by his idolaters either; for Norvins and others have the assurance to tell us, that the Congress of Prague, the very Congress which made these splendid offers, was only a treacherous Star-Chamber tribunal, destined to condemn Napoleon without trial or appeal. Certain it is, however, that the refusal came distinctly from himself. He received Metternich's proposal on the 8th August, and could easily have sent an answer that should have reached Prague on the 9th, or during the day of the 10th; he delayed his reply till the armistice and the powers of the plenipotentiaries had expired, and till his counter-project could no longer be taken into consideration by the Ambassadors at Prague; who, according to the ordinary forms of business, had no longer authority to act. By his counter-project Napoleon agreed to yield:—I. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw; but stipulated that Dantzig with its fortifications demolished should remain a free city, and that Saxony should be indemnified for the cession of the Duchy at the expense of Prussia and Austria. II. The cession of the Illyrian provinces was agreed to; but the

seaport of Trieste was reserved. III. Contained a stipulation, that the German Confederation should extend to the Oder. Lastly, the territory of Denmark was to be guaranteed.

It was after midnight, on the 11th of August, when these proposals reached Prague. On the following morning, the Ambassadors declared their powers extinct, and Metternich announced the termination of the Congress. At midnight, a beacon lighted on the White Mountain proclaimed the truce at an end; and from hill to hill the wild glare of signal fires soon carried to distant Silesia the notes of warlike preparation. A hundred thousand Russians and Prussians instantly commenced their march towards Bohemia, and on the 12th of August, Austria declared war against France.

Napoleon, informed of this decided step taken by his father-in-law, sent his acquiescence to the terms proposed; but Metternich declared, that though their acceptance would have ensured a peace on the 10th, "it was now too late; as nothing could be done without consulting the Emperor Alexander, then hourly expected at Prague."

The Duke of Vicenza, charged with a private communication to the Emperor of Austria, still lingered in Bohemia; but on the 16th, immediately after the first interview between the two Emperors, he was dismissed with the information, that the allied powers had resolved to trust their cause to the fortunes of war. The proposal to assemble another Congress proved equally unsuccessful. Napoleon was in the very act of leaving Dresden on the 15th August, when Count Narbonne arrived from Prague; and having listened to the Ambassador's report, he dictated, with one foot already on the steps of his carriage, the following instructions to the

Duke of Bassano :—"Though the Allies place so much reliance on the events of war, nothing need prevent us from negotiating during their progress. Write to Metternich, therefore, and tell him, that I propose a Congress to be held in a frontier town which may be declared neutral." As the Allied Sovereigns declined to decide upon this proposal till it had been submitted to the other members of what was now the "Grand Alliance," war became inevitable.

It seems very difficult to account for Napoleon's conduct during the progress of these negotiations; but the closer we examine it, the more will it tend, perhaps, to confirm the opinion, which a careful scrutiny of the tenor of his life must produce, that he was never able to form a true estimate of his position, or capable of tracing out for himself a clear and distinct line of action which, on fair calculation, should lead to satisfactory results. In politics as in war, he was from first to last a mere hazard-player, with great funds at command, which, staked without scruple, and unchecked by moral or religious principles of any kind, naturally produced vast gains while the dice turned in his favour, and lost others of equal magnitude the moment that fortune forsook his side. With the moral certainty that Austria would join the Allies if they remained unbroken, and if time were left her to complete her armaments, he granted a truce at the very moment when victory had again joined his standard, and when every hour's delay was certain to be of far greater advantage to his adversaries than to himself.

His supporters naturally ascribe this moderation to a sincere desire for peace. But plain facts disprove their assertions: for he refused the most favourable and glorious terms ever offered to the ruler of civilized empires;

terms far more favourable, indeed, than could be gained by the events of war, after hostile armies superior to his own had been allowed to gather round him during the period of the armistice. The instructions, already quoted, which he gave Caulincourt on sending him to Prague, show that his intention was to deceive, procrastinate, and separate the Allies: and though the latter object may, in itself, have been perfectly legitimate, his other objects, and the mode by which he endeavoured to accomplish them, prove that he had learned nothing by experience, and could only see in the future a repetition of the past. He had seen the different alliances formed against his power dissolved by the first reverses their own want of union had occasioned; but he forgot that he had always made the vanquished pay so dearly for weakness and failure, that experience could hardly fail to teach them the imperative necessity of concord and perseverance. From the very commencement of his career, deceit, falsehood, violence, and treachery, had been weapons of every-day use to him; but he could not comprehend, that those who had been so constantly deceived should refuse at last to place farther reliance on the faith so often found wanting.

If the recollection of former successful negotiations, in which he only required to dictate terms, left him unprepared for the resistance he experienced at Prague, so did the recollection of former victories blind him to the formidable opposition he was to encounter in the approaching campaign. He had formerly contended only against princes supported by armies numerically inferior even to his own: he now had nations and national armies arrayed against him, and led to the field by monarchs who were fighting not for fame or conquest, but to free their subjects from the hated tyranny of

foreign oppressors. Napoleon, however, saw not the difference; and expected to vanquish nations as easily as he had formerly defeated ill-commanded armies. A curious conversation reported by Marshal St Cyr renders this very evident.

The marshal, who had been called suddenly to Dresden, reached that city during the night of the 12th August, and was immediately admitted to the presence of the Emperor. Napoleon was engaged in marking out on the map the position of the troops; but laying aside his work, turned to the marshal: "Well," he said, "so Austria declares war against me!" St Cyr replied, "that he looked upon it as a great misfortune."

"What!" continued Napoleon, "have you any doubt of my beating the Austrians?" "Certainly not," replied the courtly marshal; "if your majesty employs all the means at your disposal; but a power like Austria throws a great weight into the scale."

"Oh! that is of no consequence: we shall beat them. A brilliant campaign awaits us: a very brilliant one. I speak as a general; as a sovereign my heart bleeds. I grieve for the people, and regret the mischief the war must occasion. But what do you think the Austrians will do?"

"I expect they will advance from Bohemia into Saxony and Bavaria, and operate between the Rhine and the Elbe in rear of our army."

"How! you think so? No, they will never presume to act in this manner before me: I have too often punished them. I wish it were so; but they will never risk anything of the kind. You are completely mistaken." Events soon proved, however, that it was the Emperor himself who was in error.

In relating this conversation at greater length than

we have done, St Cyr remarks, that formerly Napoleon could very well bear contradiction; but that, since the assumption of the imperial title, adulation had rendered him haughty and overbearing. This is probably very true, and such a change may be expected from an ordinary man; though he who is thus swayed by flattery and a title can never be called a great one.

On neither side had the negotiation been allowed to slacken military preparations. All Europe heard the trumpet sound to arms, and from the farthest extremities of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Sweden, reinforcements were hurrying forward to join the Allies; while France, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, and the States of the Confederation, poured out their levies to strengthen the myriads of Napoleon.

Never had civilized nations been called upon for such mighty efforts: from the commencement of the armistice, Europe had heard the notes of preparation sound incessantly through all her states; and when the signal-fires from the Bohemian hills told that peace had again bade the world farewell, more than a million of men stood ready for the fray. The armies now assembled, and destined to fight in the most gigantic contest that ever stained the earth with the blood of her children, were divided in the following manner:—

	MEN.
1. The French on their extreme left, at Hamburg, under Davoust, ...	37,500
2. On the middle Elbe, General Gerrard, .	14,000
3. At Luckau, the army of Marshal Oudinot,	72,000
4. In Silesia, under Marshal Ney, and afterwards under Marshal M'Donald, . .	130,000
5. Watching the outlets of the Bohemian mountains, under St Cyr and Poniatowsky,	37,000
6. Under the immediate orders of Napoleon, between Goritz, Zittau, and Dresden, .	133,000

Disposable in the field—423,500 men, with 1300 pieces of artillery. This includes neither the two small corps, one stationed at Leipzig and another at Minden, nor the garrisons of Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg, which were not altogether disposable, and amounted to about 30,000 men. On the extreme right of Napoleon's vast line of operations, which extended from the Baltic to the Adriatic, stood Eugene Beauharnais, with the Italian army of 50,000 men. This force threatened the southern provinces of Austria. Between the centre and the extreme right, Marshal Wrede was posted with 25,000 Bavarians, who watched the Austrians on the banks of the Inn. And at Wurzburg, Marshal Augereau was assembling an army of reserve, destined to act according to circumstances, either in Saxony or Bavaria. If to these vast multitudes we add the garrisons blockaded in Dantzig, Glogau, Custrin, Stettin, Modelin, and Zamosk, it gives a force of more than 600,000 men arrayed in arms, to uphold the cause of tyranny and oppression. But years of suffering had taught wisdom alike to nations and princes; and justice and freedom were now physically as well as morally stronger than their iron-handed adversary; and great as his efforts had been, Napoleon now found his mighty hosts outnumbered in the field.

The Grand Army of the Allies assembled in Bohemia, amounted to nearly 220,000 men, and consisted of 120,000 Austrians, 55,000 Russians, and 45,000 Prussians. Covering Berlin and the Mark-Brandenbourg stood the "Army of the North," under the Crown Prince of Sweden, composed of 73,000 Prussians, 21,000 Russians, and 20,000 Swedes. On the lower Elbe was General Count Walmoden, with a motley corps of 23,000 men, composed of Swedes, Hanoverians, Prussians, Russians, Mecklenburg and Hanseatic bands.

In the centre, and forming the connecting link between the Grand Army and the Army of the North, stood the Silesian army under Marshal Blücher, composed of 61,400 Russians, and 37,600 Prussians; thus giving an effective force of 456,000 men, with 1400 pieces of artillery, for immediate service in the field. Of this vast army, 104,000 were cavalry, including, however, 25,000 Cossacks, Calmucks and Baskiers, troops of little use on the day of battle.

Besides these armies, Austria had 40,000 men on the borders of Illyria, and 25,000 on the Inn: the first of these armies confronted Eugene Beauharnais with his Italian forces; the second, Marshal Wrede and the Bavarians. An Austrian reserve of 60,000 men was forming between Vienna and Presburg; while Marshal Bennigsen was assembling a Russian reserve of equal strength in Poland. The fortresses on the Oder and Vistula, still held by the French, and blockaded by the Allies, detained 89,000 Russians and Prussians round their walls.

It was not, however, in numbers alone, that the Allies were superior to the French, but in the spirit also by which the troops were animated. The French retained their usual gallantry indeed, but the Germans were enthusiastic in the cause, and nobly eager to free their fatherland from shame and danger. The soldiers had received the news of the armistice with great indignation, and had loudly exclaimed against treachery, and what they deemed the cowardly arts of ministers and diplomatists; and its termination, which found them in far better condition for strife, was certainly hailed with boundless delight. "All who were not French," says Norvins, "awaited the renewal of hostilities with impatient ferocity;" which, plainly spoken, would mean, that brave and

patriotic men were naturally anxious to avenge years of oppression on their haughty and overbearing foes. The general feeling that inspired the troops and the country cannot, indeed, be better expressed than in the words of a patriotic soldier who shared in the toils and dangers of the time. The advance of the French to Luckau had caused a newly-raised corps of Pomeranian Landwehr to be suddenly ordered out to reinforce Bülow's army.

"The courier arrived in the morning," says our informant, "and in the evening the whole of the gallant band were already on the march. The men were in peasants' frocks and without muskets, but they wore the fatherland cross in their hats, and had stout lances in their good strong hands; and though untrained and unpractised, they were full of courage and resolution. Loud blessings accompanied us; though every face, those of the soldiers excepted, expressed the anxious question, 'How are these unarmed men to encounter the conquering soldiers of France?' But the Pomeranians would have encountered half the world; and jovial huzzas followed each other, till our wives, mothers, sisters, and sweethearts, had taken their tearful leave of us—till we had torn ourselves away from all whom the bonds of love and friendship bound to our hearts, and were left with good confidence in ourselves, to take our first step in the iron fields of war and battle. Future safety had, however, been provided for all who were dear to us; for wives, mothers, children—for the young, the aged, helpless, and infirm. They were never again to fall under the yoke of oppression. Vessels were engaged; and if God proved averse to our arms, if His high will had decreed the ruin of our country, then were they to embark for Russia while we fell back fighting. We had resolved to maintain the contest as long as a drop of blood continued to circulate

in our veins."* Such high resolves, bearing the impress of ancient rather than of modern times, show how frightful must have been the tyranny that called them forth, and how fiery the spirit of the patriot soldier sent to battle by the same impelling influence.

To this general enthusiasm the French had nothing to oppose but the personal gallantry of the troops, the long experience of the commanders, and the ambition of the lower ranks of officers, eager for pensions, preferment, and decorations. The Spanish war and the Russian campaign had dissolved the spell of invincibility which had so long cheered on to victory the soldiers of the Empire and Republic; the hope of conquest flashed no more in living light before the spirits of the brave; and in the mass, the army and the people of France were both tired alike of endless bloodshed. Napoleon himself afterwards accused his marshals of having shown a want of zeal in the cause, and of having been more desirous of returning to their luxurious palaces in France, than of continuing the contest. And Baron Fain tells us, that there was a great deal of despondency in the army even before the signature of the truce, and when victory had to some extent rewarded their exertions. "The flames," he says, "against which we have to contend for the possession of every village, the general levy *en-masse* connected with this system, and the horrors certain to result from such a method of war, furnish the desponding with ample food for melancholy reflections. 'What a contest! it will destroy us all,' and other shameful expressions of the same kind, are heard from too many quarters; a proof how far the pernicious rust of wealth and prosperity has already

* Erinnerungen aus dem Befreiungskrieg. Von J. L. Kretchmer. Danzig, 1838.

corroded the iron-tempered souls of our warriors. The mere word 'armistice' helps to calm these agitated spirits; the future no longer appears in such gloomy colours; and complaints give way to the delusive hopes of peace and a speedy return to Paris."

It is said, that some of the French officers went so far as to advise Napoleon to retire beyond the Rhine, instead of risking a defensive campaign on the banks of the Elbe, and in the centre of a hostile country. In a mere military point of view, the advice might be good; and the result has shown that it was so; but strategy must sometimes be subject to policy: and it is very certain that a retreat beyond the Rhine would, of itself, have been a defeat without even fighting, though it might not have been so disastrous as the one which ultimately followed. If these officers were not called upon for their opinion, the Emperor's reply was certainly a just one: for he told them, "that he did not ask them for advice regarding the measures he had to pursue; but merely demanded their obedience to his orders in carrying them into effect."

Beyond maintaining his ground in Saxony, and striking a blow at Berlin, it does not appear that Napoleon had any fixed plan for the approaching campaign. Dresden had been made a place of arms; the old fortifications of the city had undergone some repair; and an entrenched camp, enclosing the whole of the city and suburbs, had been formed. Thus, from Pirna to Hamburg, the Elbe, with the fortresses of Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg, became the basis of the French line of operations. As long as Austria remained neutral, the line was a very strong one; but the moment the cabinet of Vienna joined the Allies, the position became worthless in the extreme: for it was

completely outflanked by Bohemia; from the mountains of which the hostile armies could sally for that pleasure, and attack either Dresden, the main station of the French depôts, or, turning their right, act in their very rear, and force them, as the result proved, to abandon the line of the Elbe altogether.

"Nothing," says Folard," is of more consequence to a general than the gift of penetrating the plans of his enemies:" and yet we here find Napoleon totally unable to discover what was almost the self-evident project of the Allies. His letters, written from Dresden and Bautzen, between the 13th and 18th August, all show that his measures were calculated on meeting the main body of the enemy on the right bank of the Elbe, where, if they proved successful, they would still have had the river to arrest their further progress: whereas, by acting on the left bank, they completely turned the French defences, fought on even terms, and found no obstacle to check their advance if victory crowned their efforts. At no time, indeed, do we find Napoleon acting on any fixed plan of operation during the campaign: he merely watched the movements of his adversaries, trusting that they would commit some great error of which he might be able to take advantage. "The enemy will make false movements," was the usual saying at the French head-quarters, "and we shall then fall upon and crush them." But he who trusts solely to the errors of his foes, may soon find himself engaged in a labyrinth of which they alone hold the clue: and so it proved with Napoleon.

The French, though slightly inferior to the Allies in the number of their troops, and wanting altogether the patriot zeal by which the latter were so nobly inspired, had, nevertheless, advantages on their side, from which,

with skill and ability, splendid results might yet have been derived. They were under the command of an absolute and irresponsible chief, who exercised unbounded authority in his army, and whose orders no one presumed to question or dispute. The general and staff-officers were men of great military experience; had long acted together: the method of carrying on the duty was necessarily well known to all, and it may be presumed that the service was quickly and correctly performed. The French also were better concentrated than the Allies; they acted on the interior line, while their enemies, acting on the exterior line, formed a vast semicircle around them.

Such a situation, at all times dangerous, was here doubly so from the composition of the allied armies, as well as from the manner in which they were commanded. The multitudinous host consisted of the troops of four different nations, and were purposely mixed together, so as to prevent any disaster which might happen from falling exclusively on the soldiers of one country. This arrangement, however judicious in itself, rendered not only the general command extremely difficult, but extended the same difficulty to the commander of every one of the separate armies. And it may be truly said, that at the moment when operations commenced, there existed no where any supreme authority capable of enforcing unity of action: certainly none that could overcome unexpected difficulties, or remedy serious disasters. It was only victory which, at the very outset, brought harmony in its train, and cemented the heterogeneous mass into one compact and efficient body.

And who was to hold command over the mightiest hosts that civilized nations had ever sent forth to com-

bat in the cause of freedom and independence? It seemed a post that kings, emperors, or the victors in many fields of fame, could alone hope to fill with honour and advantage: and yet the high trust devolved on one who had no claim of this nature to offer. Mr Alison tells us, that the Emperor Alexander aspired to the command of the army:* our own opinion, from all we have been able to learn, is, that it was actually pressed upon him, but that he declined the offer, though he always took an active part in the field, as well as in the correspondence relating to military operations. What fixed the selection of the generalissimo is unknown, though the nomination was certainly looked upon as a strange one: for to the exclusion of the Arch-Dukes Charles and John of Austria, who had both commanded armies in the field,—to the exclusion also of Count Wittgenstein and Barclay de Tolly, the heroes, as they were called, of the Russian campaign, the command of the army destined to liberate Europe from the thraldom of Napoleon, was conferred on the Austrian Field-Marshal Prince Schwarzenberg,—an officer totally unknown to fame, who had never, till the campaign in Volhinia, held any high military appointment,

* "The command, in truth, would have been unanimously conferred on the Emperor by the allied powers, had it not been for the arrival of Moreau, and the high place immediately assigned to him in the Russian military councils. The Austrians, not unnaturally, felt apprehensive of being placed, in some degree, under the command of a French general, from whose hostility they had suffered so much; and it was soon painfully evident, that, on this account, no cordial co-operation on their part could be hoped for, if the Emperor Alexander were invested with the supreme command. In these circumstances, that generous and noble Prince, though not without a severe pang, relinquished his claim to that elevated situation."—*History of Europe*, vol. ix.

and was, in general estimation, distinguished only for personal bravery and courtly manners!

But though this appointment excited great surprise at the time, and gave very little satisfaction, particularly to the Russians, who were displeased to find that none of their officers were entrusted with the command of an army, it is not likely that a more fortunate one could well have been made. If Prince Schwarzenberg never displayed any great ability in the field; was not only a slow and cautious, but a timid commander; constantly trembling, as he has told us himself, for the personal safety of the sovereigns who were in some measure under his care; he yet atoned for his want of skill, confidence, and celerity, by qualities of the highest value and importance in his situation. He evinced, from first to last, the most admirable tact and temper, a great knowledge of character, and wonderful judgment in managing the conflicting elements of which his numerous and half-barbarous host was composed. When we say that he commanded an army in which there was a council of sovereigns and a council of ministers—an army in which duty was performed according to every method known to European troops, orders given in as many languages as there were parties to the alliance, and officers holding high staff situations, as little acquainted with their superiors and inferiors as with the system according to which the general service was to be carried on; and if, having said this, we add that he led such an army to victory, it will be sufficient proof that he was, in truth, no ordinary man.

Some idea of the difficulties the leader of such a host had to contend with, may be judged of from the fact, that the Crown Prince of Sweden, who commanded the

Army of the North under the new generalissimo, had himself aspired to the supreme military authority. Excessive vanity was Bernadotte's ruling passion: expecting already to fill the throne of Napoleon, and believing that his military fame and high station, as successor to the Crown of Sweden, gave him far greater claims to the chief command than any which an Austrian general could urge, he was not likely to prove a very tractable subordinate. Political motives, the wish to secure the aid of Sweden against France, had induced the allied monarchs to confer upon him a distinguished command; but though his jealous enmity of Napoleon was well known, very little confidence was or could be reposed in him. A Frenchman bearing arms against his native land, could not be very implicitly trusted by banded patriots fighting for their country's freedom: and the general who, affecting republican principles, had accepted rank, wealth, honour, and the title of Prince of Ponte-Corvo, from the hands of Napoleon, was not likely to be esteemed a very lofty character. Still less was a marshal of France to be respected, when he availed himself of the high station to which the fame of his country's arms had raised him, to insult his former chief and sovereign. And Bernadotte did so, when, immediately after the retreat from Moscow, he offered his mediation to Napoleon, and, in the very letter which contained this offer, upbraided the lord-superior of the Prince of Ponte-Corvo, "with having sacrificed the soldiers of Austerlitz, Jena, Freidland, and Wagram, in an enterprise, the ruinous consequences of which he," Bernadotte, "had foreseen from the moment the French army plunged into Russia!"

Nor was his conduct during the early part of the campaign calculated to remove the unfavourable impressions

necessarily created by these unpromising circumstances. With an army of nearly 25,000 men, he remained perfectly stationary in Pomerania, while the Russians and Prussians were fighting the sanguinary combats of Lützen and Bautzen; he allowed the interesting and patriotic city of Hamburg to be captured almost within reach of his guns by a force greatly inferior to his own, and only took a decided part in the contest when the allies had gathered a host which rendered their success no longer doubtful. So little, indeed, was he trusted, even in his own army, that the Prussian Generals commanding corps under him entered into a compact with Blücher, by which they pledged themselves, on the eve of the battle of Leipzig, to support their countrymen in the field, whatever might be the orders of the Crown Prince.

Of different character was the gallant leader of the Silesian army. Gebhard Leberecht of Blücher was born at Rostock in 1742; he was of ancient and noble family, and in the 71st year of his age when the general voice of the nation and the troops, rather than the wish of cabinets and ministers, placed him in the high station which was soon to render him the Arminius of modern times. The early part of his career had not been fortunate. His education had been neglected, and his father, wishing to prevent his entering the army, placed him under the care of a relation who resided in the Isle of Rügen, at a distance from the scene of the Seven Years' War. But Sweden having joined the alliance against Frederick II., a regiment of Swedish hussars destined to act against the Prussians, passed through the island, and furnished the fiery Blücher with the long desired opportunity of becoming a soldier. Unknown to his relations he entered the regiment as a cadet; vain were the efforts of his friends to make him

change his resolution; he followed his new calling, and accompanied the troops to the field. He displayed from the very outset the fiery courage for which he was ever afterwards distinguished. Unhorsed in a skirmish, he was taken prisoner by a party of Prussian hussars, and carried before the general, who, struck with his fine person and gallant bearing, showed him great attention, and invited him to exchange the Swedish for the Prussian service. Blücher, true to his standard, refused the offer, till he should be regularly exchanged and discharged from his Swedish corps; and this arrangement having been effected, he entered the Prussian regiment of Belling, which he ultimately rose to command.

As a subaltern, he was present at the battles of Kunersdorff and Freyberg. After the peace of Hubertsburg, the regiment was stationed in Poland, where, like others, he led the idle and dissipated life then common to young hussar officers. It is probable that on some points he exceeded his comrades: for when senior lieutenant and brevet captain of his regiment, a junior officer was promoted to a troop over his head. Blücher immediately demanded his discharge, which was twice refused; but the third application was worded in such uncourtly terms, that Frederick took him at his word, adding to the letter, "Captain Von Blücher's resignation is accepted, and he may take himself to the devil."

Without friends or prospects, this was no doubt a severe blow to our hero; but he was not of a character to sink without an effort. He took lands in one of the Polish provinces acquired by Prussia, married a lady of great beauty; and prospered so well as a farmer, that he was enabled to purchase a property near Stargard in Prussian Pomerania. Here success still attended him,

and he soon became so influential a person in the province, that he was elected a member of the States, and was particularly noticed by Frederick II., during his annual visits to the country. But though the king went so far in his partiality as to advance considerable sums of money to aid the enterprising country gentleman in carrying on valuable improvements, he constantly refused to reinstate him in his military rank. And it was not till the accession of Frederick William, that after being fifteen years removed from the service, he was again restored, with all his lost rank, to the army which he was to lead to victory.

As colonel of his old regiment of hussars, Blücher joined the forces which under the Duke of Brunswick took the field against the French Republic at the commencement of the Revolution. And it may be truly asserted, that the only laurels the Prussians acquired during these campaigns, were those gathered in by Blücher and his horsemen. Indefatigable in exertion, his zeal, daring, and sagacity, were conspicuous on every occasion. Numerous as were the actions in which he was engaged, success constantly attended him wherever he commanded in person. And it was a universal saying after the war, that there would have been no peace of Basle if all had struck home like Blücher. Nor could this praise be undeserved: for with his single regiment he had, during these short, and otherwise inglorious campaigns, taken 4000 prisoners, 1500 horses, 5 standards, 11 pieces of artillery, and 7 ammunition-waggons. The king, in acknowledgment of his brilliant services, promoted him to the rank of Major-General.

This short war laid the foundation for Blücher's popularity and subsequent fame. His open, frank, and kind disposition, gained him the attachment of the soldiers;

his cheerful and convivial disposition, wit, and hilarity, rendered him a favourite in society ; and his tall, handsome, and soldier-like person, set off by the fame of his bravery, naturally gained him the admiration and in some instances even the affections of the fair.

Though a gambler from fashion—for *pharo* was the fashionable vice of the time—and addicted besides to wine and women, Blücher was never the slave of passions that have so often mastered the strongest minds. During the intervals of action, he endeavoured even to atone for his want of early education ; and the Journal which he published of his campaigns on the Rhine, as well as a small work on Cavalry Service, are always mentioned with applause by German writers who quote them.

Though he rarely took any part in State affairs, the line of policy adopted by Prussia in 1805 was so completely at variance with his direct and manly views, that he deviated so far from his ordinary practice, as actually to present a memorial to the king against the measures in progress. And when, in the following year, a rupture with France became inevitable, he offered to assemble the troops he commanded in Westphalia, and fall upon the unprepared enemy, drive the French beyond the Rhine, and disarm the States of the Confederation, before they could be supported. A plan so daring was, however, too much at variance with the timid policy of the cabinet of Berlin to be entertained even for a moment: and Blücher was only called in to share in the defeat of Auerstadt. His conduct during the short contest we have had occasion to relate : its disastrous termination, the fatigues he had undergone, the anxiety he had suffered, threw him, soon after the peace of Tilsit, on a bed of sickness, and for some time endangered his life. During the paroxysms of

fever, he prophesied the fall of Napoleon, the renovated glory of the Prussian monarchy, and declared to all that he would yet conduct the king in triumph to Paris. Nor did the conviction that he was destined to free his country from thraldom ever forsake him during the darkest days of their mutual adversity.

For some years before the Russian campaign, he held a command in Pomerania; and though adjoining the French garrisons and possessions behaved on every occasion with far more moderation than from the impetuosity of his temper was at first expected. But when the alliance with France was declared at the commencement of 1812, the indignation of the old hussar could be restrained no longer, and he had to be removed from his post. At Berlin, where he was more within hearing of the hated strangers, his language became still more imprudent, and it was only the king himself who contrived to pacify him. Blücher had some demands on the state, and was anxious to have the accounts settled; declaring, however, that he would not receive the amount till the finances of the country should be restored to their former condition. The king availed himself of this generosity on the part of one who was not wealthy, and whose expenses were considerable; and sending for the irritated soldier, made him a present of the domain of Kunzendorf in Silesia: and desired him, as he was a good farmer, to go and improve his lands, gather strength for himself, and be in readiness to take the field when the country should call for his services.

The old hussar considered this as a hint that better times were coming, and retired in consequence to his new domain, at a distance from all contact with the French. He was never a member of the Tugenbund, though

often invited to join that association. Secret combinations were naturally at variance with his direct and open character: and it was a curious circumstance, a proof perhaps of the accuracy of an old saying, "extremes often meet," that the fiery and vehement, in some respects illiterate Blücher, was for years the most intimate friend of the calm, reserved, accomplished, and intellectual Scharnhorst. The solution of the enigma is simpler perhaps than might appear at first sight: differing greatly in temperament, both these eminent individuals were loyal, zealous, and high-minded patriots; and, endued with deep penetration, each could easily perceive the distinguished merit of the other.

Blücher's nomination to the command of the Prussian army, at the commencement of the campaign of 1813, experienced opposition from various quarters. None doubted his zeal and gallantry, but many doubted his talents and dreaded his hussar impetuosity; and it was only through the favour of the troops and the love of the people, who in his direct, bold, and manly bearing, beheld what they deemed a perfect model of the true German character, joined to the enthusiasm with which Scharnhorst spoke of his military genius, that his appointment was ultimately effected. When the allied forces were remodelled during the armistice, new difficulties arose respecting him. His conduct at Bautzen was blamed; many of his bitter speeches were circulated in the army; and the Russian generals, displeased that no officer of their nation was entrusted with a chief command, deemed themselves slighted in being placed under the orders of one whom they termed "an illiterate soldier, distinguished only for brute courage; and that at the very time when they were about to encounter the most scientific captain of the age." Remarks of this sort

were very general; and it is not improbable that the task assigned to Blücher was looked upon as one which he would decline to undertake, and which would, therefore, induce him to resign his command.

It was on the 11th August that General Barclay de Tolly, accompanied by General Diebitch, the chief of the Staff, brought him these secret instructions, drawn up in conformity with the general plan of operations agreed upon at Trachenberg. They were perfectly clear and very ably conceived, but extremely difficult of execution. According to these instructions, Blücher was to "close upon the French, never lose sight of them, and arrive with them at the same time, if they attempted to throw themselves on the Grand Army, which was alone to act on the offensive." "The army of Silesia," General Barclay continued, "was to engage in no decisive action."—Here Blücher shook his head.—"If pressed upon by the enemy, it was to fall back, and draw them on into the interior of the country; but turn immediately on their turning, avoid all risk of being defeated, and arrive in time to take a part in the decisive battle on the banks of the Elbe."

Blücher at once declared that he was totally incompetent to the execution of such a task. "Of the arts of a Fabius," he said, "he knew nothing; another would manage such things much better: as for his part, he could do little more than go straight forward and strike home. Though deeply grateful for the confidence reposed in him by the Sovereigns, he found himself reluctantly obliged to decline the command of an army so strictly limited to defensive operations." General Diebitch, a Prussian by birth, had the merit of removing this difficulty, by observing, "that General Blücher placed too verbal a construction on the orders: for an

officer commanding an army of a hundred thousand men could never be absolutely bound down to the defensive: so that, if opportunity offered, he had only to attack and defeat the enemy."

Blücher, well pleased with this explanation, wished to have it in writing, as an addition to the instructions themselves; but this Barclay declined to give: on which the former closed the conference, saying, that "he accepted the command on condition of being allowed to attack the enemy when and where he thought proper; and as General Barclay would of course report this understanding to the allied Sovereigns, it would be for them, in their wisdom, to give him another appointment, if it did not correspond with their views." As the subject was never again reverted to, Blücher of course retained his command. Some evil consequences and much danger arose, however, from the manner in which these instructions were drawn up and afterwards explained. The Russian Generals, Langeron and Sacken, who now commanded corps under Blücher, had both commanded armies in the field, and served unwillingly under a stranger; and as copies of the instructions had been *secretly* confided to them, they thought themselves bound to act up to their general spirit, and keep a strict watch on the old, impetuous, and unscientific hussar. And not being aware of the explanation under which Blücher had accepted the command, they were at first guilty of various acts of disobedience—Langeron in particular—from which some loss was sustained, and some of the fruits of victory forfeited. It was success, and Blücher's admirable tact and management, that alone removed this threatening source of evil.

Nature had certainly endued this commander with brilliant military qualities. Without scientific know-

ledge, his intercourse with the world, his quick and penetrating understanding, had greatly helped to remedy his want of education. Fully conscious of his own deficiency, of which he spoke without reserve, he never undervalued the acquirements of others; and was besides perfectly conscious of what he was capable of effecting by the force of his inborn qualities.

His boundless intrepidity, his constancy in misfortune, and high courage, which rose superior to every danger, seemed to result from the personal strength which, during his early campaigns, had been proved in so many hand-to-hand encounters. And hence his belief, perhaps, that there were few difficulties from which an army might not be extricated by a close combat of man against man. The shadowy phantom of that military skill which was supposed to render Napoleon invincible, and before which so many gallant soldiers had turned pale, never therefore shook the iron nerves of Blücher, who feared no accessible enemy.

Bravery was to him the foundation of all military fame; and he deemed it impossible for the brave ever to forfeit fairly gained honour, and had not the slightest apprehension that a retreat or lost battle could affect his own reputation. In the officers of his staff he only placed confidence when he thought them enterprising; but his confidence once given was entire and unshaken. And whenever he adopted the idea or proposal of another, he followed it up with as much energy as if it had been his own: envy and jealousy, the marks of little minds, were foreign to his character. Active, enterprising, and indefatigable, retaining under the snows of age the energy of youth, it is admitted that in the field Blücher was eager and impatient, and could ill await the slow development of operations: his fiery

temperament demanded prompt results. The cavalry was therefore his favourite arm; and he looked on every action in which they had failed to take a leading part as unsatisfactory, and as casting some discredit on their conduct. And even in the last years of his life, he spoke with greater pleasure of the combat of Hainau than of his most brilliant victories.

Kind to the soldiers, and even familiar with them; frank and friendly with the officers, without descending from the dignity of his station; Blücher was free from every taint of selfishness, and influenced only by the loftiest sentiments of loyalty and patriotism. His country's sufferings naturally impressed these noble sentiments more deeply on his heart, and called forth, at the same time, that bitter hatred of her oppressors, which so strongly characterised the latter years of his life. The ambition of commanding large armies was altogether foreign to him; and he was as ready to place himself at the head of a squadron as at the head of a hundred thousand men. Such was the leader, whose noble zeal and fiery genius communicated to the Allied Army that gallant spirit which ultimately led them in triumph to the very gates of Paris.

The combined powers had made good use of the time gained by the armistice. Treaties had been entered into with England; and that country, making efforts for the general cause superior to any which had ever been witnessed, supplied them with money, clothing, arms, and ammunition, to an extent which after-ages will hardly believe that one nation could ever have furnished. A plan of operations, afterwards acceded to by Austria and skilfully followed out, had been agreed upon at a meeting held at Trachenberg, between the Emperor Alexander, the King of Prussia, and the Crown Prince

of Sweden. According to this arrangement, as explained in the instructions given to the Crown Prince of Sweden and Marshal Blücher,—for the original wording is obscure, and at variance with the subsequent execution,—the Grand Army of the Allies was alone to act offensively against the principal French army; the Silesian army and the Army of the North were to avoid all general actions against the combined French armies; that is, against the armies of Oudinot or M'Donald, if reinforced by Napoleon, his Guards and reserves. It is necessary clearly to understand this, because French writers purposely misrepresent the case, and assert that the allied commanders were ordered not to encounter Napoleon, as if his skill and genius had been dreaded; whereas they were ordered not to encounter his Guards and reserves if added to the armies already opposed to them. This plan of operations meant, in fact, to harass the French, and act on their line of communication; and has been ascribed by Scott and others to General Moreau and Bernadotte, who, as French officers, were supposed to be well acquainted with Napoleon's system of tactics, and well able, therefore, to counteract it. This is estimating Napoleon and his former subordinates at too high a rate. The plan of operation belonged to Prince Schwarzenberg, was arranged before Moreau's arrival, and was far from being altogether in accordance with the views of the Crown Prince, who aspired to act a more important part than was actually allotted to him.

Little need here be said of Moreau, as he had no opportunity of taking any share in the events of the campaign. By joining the enemies of his country, he necessarily forfeited the respect of all honest patriots; and it is probable that his exaggerated military fame would also have come down to its real level, had not

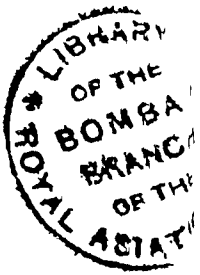
fate closed his career in the first action in which he was engaged. Michaelofsky-Danilofsky's *Memorabilia* contain the copy of a memorandum delivered by this unfortunate General to the Emperor Alexander, during the march towards Dresden, and is the only document remaining, to show what were his views and opinions respecting the operations in progress; and nothing can possibly be more superficial, or farther below the reputation of its author.

Fouché, Duke of Otranto, had been called to Dresden, whence he was despatched as Governor into Illyria; disturbances having broken out in that province on the appearance of some English ships on the coast—another proof of the popularity of Napoleon's rule. "Let it be proclaimed at every corner, that I intend to retain Illyria at all hazard," were the Emperor's parting words to Fouché. The real object of the mission was, to remove the former Minister of Police to a distance from Paris.

During the armistice, and shortly before the opening of the Congress of Prague, the Emperor paid a visit to Mayence, where the Empress Marie Louise met him by appointment. It may well be supposed, that mere gallantry and attention were not the sole objects of such a journey at so important a moment; and it is asserted, on what we are bound to consider good authority, that it was undertaken for the purpose of making the Empress use her interest at Vienna in favour of her husband, and plead his cause with her father. She was also induced to write to the Arch-Duke Charles, who was requested to exert his influence in the same cause, and counteract the power of Metternich and Count Stadion. The most ordinary observer will easily perceive, that events were of too grave a character to be

influenced by a few letters, which could have been dictated from Dresden as well as from Mayence. Nor was the Emperor long absent on this expedition: for he returned in ample time to mar his best hopes of the Congress of Prague. On the 15th of August he left the Saxon capital to assume the command of his troops: and from this moment to the very end of the campaign, we find him constantly at the head of his Guards and reserves, following what he termed his "*va et vient*," or come-and-go system, which so greatly contributed to the ruin of his army.*

* This constant marching and countermarching between Dresden and Bautzen had obtained for him, in the Saxon capital, the appellation of the Bautzen messenger.—"*Bautzener Bote.*"

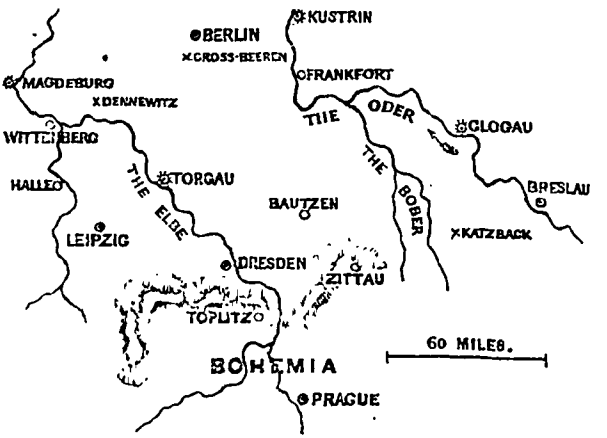


CHAPTER III.

RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES: NAPOLEON, DECEIVED IN HIS EXPECTATION OF FINDING THE GRAND ARMY OF THE ALLIES IN LUSATIA, MARCHES INTO SILESIA: PRESSES BACK MARSHAL BLUCHER, AND THEN RETRACES HIS STEPS TOWARDS THE ELBE. BATTLES OF THE KATZBACH AND GROSS-BEEREN: PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG ADVANCES INTO SAXONY: BATTLE OF DRESDEN.

NAPOLEON had founded all his measures on the expectation of meeting the Allies in Lusatia; and had, therefore, assembled his principal forces round Görlitz, Bautzen, and Zittau, intending to fall upon them as soon as they should issue from the Bohemian mountains. But every thing remained perfectly tranquil along the frontier; no sound of war was heard; and it was only on the 19th when the French, driving a few Austrian light troops before them, pushed forward some corps to Gabel, Rumberg, and Friedland, that tidings of Barclay de Tolly's march, and of the junction of the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian armies on the left bank of the Elbe, were received. The intention of the Allies was now perfectly clear: the front of the French position along the Elbe was not the object of attack: the right flank of the position was to be turned, and the line of communication with France threatened. The whole of Napoleon's defensive plan, so ludicrously lauded by

historians, as calculated for every emergency, was thus frustrated at the very outset of the campaign.



The Emperor easily foresaw that 200,000 men would not remain long inactive behind the Bohemian mountains, and that a retreat to the Elbe would soon be necessary; but as he had always considered Dresden capable of making an eight days' defence, and believed, from the impetuous character of Marshal Blücher, that the fiery hussar might be drawn into a combat, even against superior numbers, he thought time would still be left him to strike a blow at the Silesian army, before any impression could be made on the Saxon capital. He, therefore, hurried with his Guards and reserves to the assistance of Marshal M'Donald, who was falling back before the advancing Prussian, and joined the retiring forces at Lowenberg, where the Bober only separated the hostile parties.

Orders were immediately given for the passage of the river; and under Napoleon's directions the troops were

soon in advance. The Prussian Marshal, informed that the whole French army was in presence, fell back in his turn; his rear-guard skirmishing fiercely with the van of the enemy, who only desisted from the sharp pursuit on the evening of the 23d, when the Allied forces had taken post at Jauer. It appears, both from Odeleben and Fain, that Napoleon was greatly delighted to find the enemy thus flying before his advanced guard, at the very opening of the campaign, though the joy thus occasioned could only have resulted from some strange confusion of ideas: for it was perfectly clear, that every additional march into Silesia augmented the difficulties of the French, who could gain nothing by Blücher's retreat,—nothing unless by a victory, which should cripple his army; and this he was avoiding by the retrograde movement that so much delighted Napoleon!

On the 22d, and before he had heard of Schwarzenberg's advance, the Emperor already ordered his Guards back to Dresden, thus showing how useless had been the pursuit of Blücher. On the 23d, he learned that the Grand Army of the Allies had entered Saxony, and immediately commenced his march towards the Elbe; leaving M'Donald with a force of 70,000 men to follow up what he termed his victory over the Silesian army.*

A thousand instances prove how trifling are the causes that often produce the greatest results, and how mighty are the changes effected in the world's destinies, by the manner in which days, hours, and sometimes minutes, are employed. And here it is possible that another day's farther pursuit of Blücher might have led to the

* Napoleon to the Major-general:—"*Gorlitz, 24th August* 1813.—My Cousin, Inform Prince Poniotowski that the Emperor defeated the Silesian army on the 21st inst., and caused them to be pursued to Jauer," &c. &c.

most important consequences, and given a different turn altogether to the events then in progress, which ultimately changed the fate of Europe.

The Silesian army was almost in a state of insubordination. The Prussian troops, ill supplied, anxious to fight the enemy, and ignorant of the object of so many harassing marches and countermarches, were greatly dissatisfied: and General Yorck, their leader, though an able commander, was, as formerly stated, the worst possible subordinate. The Russian officers served with open and avowed reluctance under Blücher: Count Langeron, in particular, who had previously commanded armies in person, was at the head of this opposition; and having privately received a copy of the secret instructions under which his superior acted, thought himself entitled to follow them out according to his own views; and had actually, on the retreat from Lowenberg, endangered the safety of the army, by his direct disobedience of orders. The admirable tact displayed by Blücher prevented an open rupture from taking place between the commanders at the very opening of the campaign: but the "state of the army was so bad," says General Muffling, "that defeat could hardly make it worse, whereas victory was sure to set every thing right." It was therefore determined to accept a battle at Jauer if the French continued the pursuit; or to become the assailants if they desisted.

Every thing remained quiet in both camps during the 24th; but news arriving on the 25th, that Napoleon, with his Guards, was in full march towards the Elbe, orders were instantly given for the whole army to advance next morning, and attack the enemy behind the Katzbach.

The Allied troops had not been long on the march,

when reports from the out picquets announced that the French were crossing the river, and advancing on their side also. At 11 o'clock, Blücher caused the army to halt under cover of some rising ground, and sent General Gneisenau, and other staff officers, to observe the motions of the foe. It was raining hard, and from a distance no clear view of the enemy could be obtained; but the French had neglected to throw out flankers, so that the Prussian officers were enabled to approach near enough to perceive that five or six thousand men only had reached the elevated plain, situated on the right bank of the *Wüthende*, or "Furious" Neisse, exactly where that mountain stream falls into the Katzbach. Count Langeron's corps, forming nearly half the army, was advancing on the left bank of the Neisse, and could lend no immediate aid; but from the state of the roads and fords, it was calculated that the corps of Yorck and Sacken would be able to strike home before the French could bring a sufficient body of troops across the Katzbach to meet them on equal terms.

His resolution once formed, Blücher never tarried with the execution. The onset was immediate: the French, though taken by surprise, showed no want of firmness; their artillery replied fiercely to that of the Allies; their infantry also advanced to meet the Prussians; and as the heavy rain rendered the fire of musketry impossible, one of the few close combats of infantry that modern history has to record, here took place in consequence. The Prussian *Landwehr*, unchecked by the fire of the French artillery, animated by the patriot spirit of the time, rushed bravely in upon the foe. "Those who fell, fell," says an actor in the gallant scene, "the rest moved quickly forward. Arrived within two paces of the French, who stood their ground firmly,

the line paused for an instant, the adverse parties contemplating each other and hesitating to strike. But Prussian officers charging with their swords, and calling out to the soldiers, 'Now lay on!' the men reversed their muskets, and disregarding the feeble bayonet, struck in upon the enemy, who were soon completely routed, few escaping the blows of our stout-handed Brandenburgers."

The French cavalry were not more successful than the infantry. Attacked by the Russian and Prussian horse, they were thrown in upon the broken infantry they had bravely attempted to aid. The confusion now became general; horse and foot, guns and tumbrils, all hurried towards the steep-banked Neisse, a mere mountain streamlet in ordinary times, but swollen by the rains into a deep and dangerous torrent, that proved how appropriately it was termed the "Furious." Many fugitives perished in its troubled waters, and thirty pieces of cannon here fell into the hands of the Prussians; while, farther to the right, General Sacken, with the Russians, overthrew two divisions of the corps of Souham, that arrived successively on the field after the day was lost.

On the left bank of the Neisse, the allies had been less successful. Count Langeron acting on his own view of the secret instructions, had sent back the greater part of his artillery, and was retiring before the French troops opposed to him. This retreat of the left wing, while the right and centre were in full advance, caused a separation between the divisions of the army that might have proved dangerous, had not Blücher guarded against its evil consequence. Surprised to hear the fire retrograding on his left, notwithstanding the great force Count Langeron had at his disposal, he ordered a reserve brigade

to take post on the right bank of the Neisse, to watch the progress of the action; and no sooner was victory decided on the centre, than he made them cross the stream and assail the rear of the enemy, who were pressing the Russians. The French did not, however, wait the onset: hearing what had happened to the rest of the army, they retired in haste; and Langeron, regretting the fault he had committed, used every effort to press upon the fugitives, and atone for his previous errors. From this day, which healed all the dissensions in the Silesian army, he became one of the most zealous supporters of his gallant commander, who, it may be truly said, derived his real authority from victory alone.

But little to Blücher was the mere possession of a battle-field; the liberation of his country, and the destruction of her foes, was his object: and this he followed with all the natural impetuosity of his character. Nothing arrested his pursuit of the vanquished; neither the deep and miry roads, rendered almost impassable by the continual rains, nor the dangerous and difficult fords through so many flooded torrents. From the 26th of August till the 3d of September, the enemy was never lost sight of; and when, on the last mentioned day, the victors halted on the banks of the Bober, more than 18,000 prisoners, including the whole of Puthod's division, 103 pieces of artillery, 250 ammunition-waggons, with all the baggage of the vanquished, had fallen into their hands. The trifling loss at which this splendid success was achieved, rendered it doubly valuable: it had cost the allies less than a thousand men in killed and wounded; the loss of the Prussians, who had borne the brunt of the action, was only three hundred!

In the north also the Allied Army had been successful; but the trophies of victory were few indeed, com-

pared to those gained in Silesia; the difference tending clearly to illustrate the different character of the commanders under whom conquest had been achieved.

From the very commencement of the campaign, Napoleon had evinced the most anxious desire to obtain possession of Berlin. In itself, the city is of no military importance whatever; and, exposed to the attacks of the enemy, all the stores and valuables that could render it an object to the invaders had purposely been removed. But the reduction of a hostile capital always casts some *éclat* on the victors, the moral effect lends some strength to their arms; and in the present case, Napoleon's hatred of the Prussians would have been gratified by the capture of the royal residence. But private pique, at all times a bad guide, is doubly so in war, as Napoleon found to his cost during the whole of these operations.

On the 13th of August, he directs Marshal Oudinot, who was at the head of 66,000 effective men, to attack the allies, and occupy Berlin. "With an army like yours," says the Emperor, "it will be easy to drive back the enemy, capture Berlin, disarm the inhabitants, and disperse the Landwehr, and all the other swarms of miserable *canaille*, or rabble," as he usually termed the new Prussian levies. "If the town resists," he continues, "your 12-pounders can make a breach in the ramparts, and fifty howitzers will easily set fire to the buildings: it was in this manner that we forced Vienna, Madrid, and other capitals to surrender." That the allies could meet Oudinot with at least 90,000 men, was entirely kept out of sight in this strategical calculation.

In conformity with these instructions, the Marshal assembled his army on the 18th of August, and advanced towards Trebin. On the 21st and 22d, the allied out-

posts were forced back; and on the 23d, the battle of Gross-Beeren took place.

Though we cannot, in a brief memoir like the present, attempt to describe the details of these numerous combats, it may be right to show in a few words how this battle was actually fought, in order that the reader who takes an interest in these matters, may form some idea of the faulty and inaccurate manner in which the most important events of our time have so often been related.

In conformity with the resolution to attack the widely extended army of the Crown Prince of Sweden, Bertrand fell with the right of the French on Tauenzien's Prussian corps, stationed at Blankenfeld, and forming the left of the Allied Army. The French commander, waiting for the co-operation of the other divisions, did not engage very sharply; and finding, about two o'clock in the day, that everything remained perfectly tranquil to his left, that no general onset seemed to be in progress, withdrew altogether from the combat, leaving several hundred prisoners in the hands of the Prussians. Time and distance had been miscalculated: the rest of the French army were in march, but had not yet reached the scene of action, and only arrived to pay the forfeit of the errors committed.

General Bülow, stationed with the main body of the Prussians to the right of Tauenzien, and some distance in the rear of Gross-Beeren, hearing the continued cannonade at Blankenfeld, seeing no enemy in his front, sent forward three battalions and four squadrons to observe, rather than to defend, the fore-named village, and then moved with his whole force to the assistance of his countrymen. Learning that no aid was required at Blankenfeld, he countermarched his troops, and was already on his return when the Crown Prince of Sweden,

to whom so many ascribe the victory, sent orders for the troops "to retire and occupy the heights immediately in front of Berlin." But General Bülow disobeyed the order; and Fortune, to show her supremacy, here crowned insubordination, the very bane of armies and military operations, with her most important success.

General Reynier, warned by the sound of artillery from Blankenfeld that the action was in progress, had advanced on his side, and had easily dislodged Bülow's feeble detachment from Gross-Beeren; but the firing having ceased on his right, and a heavy rain set in, he concluded that the battle was at an end, desisted from farther operations, and his troops were already preparing their bivouacs when Bülow returned to his former position. This distinguished officer, perceiving the advantages that might be derived from an immediate attack on the enemy, proceeded as quickly to carry it into effect; and sending to inform the Crown Prince that he was about to drive the French from Gross-Beeren, gave orders for the onset. The troops, anxious to fight, replied with loud and joyous cheers, and, under a heavy fire of artillery, advanced against an adversary brave indeed, but little prepared for the unwelcome meeting. The progress of the fray it is needless to describe: the heavy rain prevented the muskets from going off, and it is certain that, on two points at least, fierce hand-to-hand combats of infantry actually took place. The French were every where thrown: "Now," says the gallant Landwehr officer formerly quoted, "when personal strength was to decide the question instead of musketry and tactical skill, we had the most decided advantage. The pressure in the village was dreadful; and though the leading sections of the French escaped, the rear

divisions were terribly handled by our men. It was in vain that our soldiers were ordered to use their bayonets; they reversed their muskets, and struck home with the butt-ends in formidable style."

No sooner was General Reynier's corps thus defeated, than Fournier's division of cavalry arrived in the field. Ignorant of what had happened, their movements were uncertain; and charged at last by five squadrons of Prussians, who in the gloom of the evening could not perceive their strength, they were completely broken and dispersed, and driven in confusion into the adjoining forests. After the action the conquerors returned to their previous camp, a circumstance which probably gave rise to the fable circulated by French writers, who assert that their countrymen recovered the village of Gross-Beeren, and maintained it during the night. Besides the loss in killed and wounded, the vanquished left 2000 prisoners, 28 pieces of artillery, with 60 ammunition-waggons, in the hands of the victors. The Crown Prince of Sweden made no attempt with the large unbroken force at his command to pursue the fugitives, and follow up a victory achieved almost contrary to his orders: a line of conduct that agreed but ill with the spirit of the time, and tended greatly to augment the prejudice already existing against him in the army.

Though the trophies gained on this occasion were few, the advantages which resulted from the victory were considerable: the troops who had conquered were mostly young, half-trained and inexperienced soldiers, totally unacquainted with war; and they had here, in their first essay in arms, defeated the redoubted legions of France, the conquerors of Continental Europe. It was a proud reflection for these gallant bands, and

inspired them, like their victorious comrades of the Katzbach, with that spirit and confidence which never forsook them during the remainder of the war.

Nor was the success of the northern army confined to the fields of Gross-Beeren. To facilitate Marshal Oudinot's expedition against Berlin, Napoleon had ordered General Gerard to advance with 8000 men from Magdeburg, and Davoust with 25,000 from Hamburg. Both officers obeyed; but their instructions were either so ill calculated or so inaccurately followed, that Oudinot was defeated before he could derive any support from their co-operation. Gerard was completely routed at Hagelberg, in attempting to regain the fortress from which he had sallied: and Davoust, hearing what had befallen his brother commanders, retired in haste to his former position.

Brilliant as were the advantages thus gained by the allied troops in Brandenburg and Silesia, they could not have counter-balanced the disaster which befell the Bohemian army, had Napoleon availed himself with skill or ability of the victory which, as we have now to relate, he achieved under the walls of Dresden.

On discontinuing the pursuit of Blücher, the Emperor seems for a moment to have been uncertain whether he should march on Prague by the right bank of the Elbe, and strive to recal the Allies from the invasion of Saxony, by acting on their line of communication; or return to the support of St Cyr, threatened within the defences of the Saxon capital: circumstances soon decided in favour of the latter movement.

The Russian and Prussian forces had no sooner formed their junction with the grand Austrian army in Bohemia, than measures were taken for crossing the Erzgebirge, or Iron Mountains, and invading Saxony.

The object was to unite in the plains of Leipzig with the Crown Prince of Sweden, who was expected to pass the Elbe for that purpose, and on the 21st August the movement commenced. The troops crossed the mountains in five different columns ; the Austrian column on the extreme left, moving by Joachimsthal on Annaberg, being distant fifty miles from the corps of Wittgenstein, which, on the right, advanced along the direct road leading by Peterswald to Dresden. From the circuitous route thus taken, it is evident that the Saxon capital was not the object of attack, and only became so after the passage of the mountains had been effected without opposition ; and when it was discovered that Napoleon was in Silesia with his army, and that St Cyr's corps alone remained on the left bank of the Elbe.

In a council of war held on the 23d, it was resolved to take advantage of these promising circumstances, to change the direction of the march, and attack Dresden, in the hopes of carrying that important post before it could be relieved by the French Emperor. Had Napoleon's absence been known when the Allied Army commenced their movement, they would have marched directly upon Dresden by the Peterswald and the adjacent Geiersberg road, instead of making a circuitous march of fifty miles through very indifferent cross-roads. In that case, the attack on the city might have taken place three days sooner : and as all French and German writers agree in stating, that it could not have resisted for even twenty-four hours, we may conclude that chance alone here saved Napoleon's army from total destruction : and this, too, while engaged in operations which historians have lauded in the most extravagant manner.

On the 24th, the main body of the allied forces reached

Dippoldiswald, within eight or nine miles of Dresden, and it was resolved to assault the city on the following day. The mighty host surrounded the Florence of Germany; columns of attack were already formed; the adjoining hills were covered with myriads of Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, anxiously waiting the event; the monarchs were at the head of their troops, and the skirmishers already engaged with the French, when news arrived that the badness of the roads had retarded the march of General Klenau's Austrian divisions, and Schwarzenberg, afraid to grasp at the prize within his reach, delayed the onset till the following morning: and 150,000 Allies encamped tranquilly within sight of the 25,000 men of St Cyr's corps.

The morning of the 26th dawned, but no attack followed: some corps were still in the rear, and it seemed as if the Allies could attempt nothing without their 200,000 men. The assault was delayed till four o'clock in the afternoon; and before that time, the relative strength of the parties had undergone a material change. At eleven o'clock Napoleon reached the city, and his troops were soon afterwards seen filing in successive columns over the bridge of the Elbe. The fire of Wittgenstein's guns, opened upon them from the left bank of the river, could not arrest their progress: and when Schwarzenberg at last attacked the entrenchments, the number of the defenders already more than equalled the assailants.

The French had a bridge at Konigstein, protected on the left bank of the river by that impregnable fortress, and on the right by temporary works erected on the steep heights of Lilliensteín; and when on the 24th Napoleon learned the decided movement made by Schwarzenberg against Dresden, his first resolution

was to pass the Elbe by means of this bridge, and fall upon the rear of the Allied Army, and thus place them between two fires, between his own troops and the garrison and fortified camp of Dresden. This project, if carried into effect, would no doubt have led to very decisive results, as both armies would have been cut off from their respective lines of operation; but the chances were as much against the French as against the Allies: for the latter were greatly superior in numbers; and though composed of different nations, unaccustomed to act together, and consequently not so well in hand as the French, they were formidable from discipline and the spirit by which they were animated. It was necessary also to the success of this enterprise, that Dresden should be perfectly secure; for had that post fallen before the Allied Army could be defeated, then was Napoleon's situation more desperate even than at the Beresina. The game he proposed to play was therefore a desperate and life or death one; but its desperation is no proof of the high genius to which it is ascribed. Napoleon, indeed, soon saw how precarious the attempt would prove; and though he had always, in his letters and orders, spoken of Dresden as capable of holding out for eight days, he no sooner approached Stolpen, where the Dresden and Konigstein roads separate, than he despatched General Gourgaud to Dresden, to ascertain the situation of affairs, and bring exact information as to its power of resisting during the "*two or three days*" that would be required for the execution of the movement in rear of the Allied Army.

Gourgaud, having executed his mission, reached Stolpen at eleven o'clock at night, and reported without reserve that nothing but the presence of the Emperor

could save the capital from immediate capture. "The Allies," he said, "had descended into the plain, their guns had now opened upon the advanced works, and they would already have been in possession of the city, had their columns advanced to the attack. Fortunately they had been halted; but the situation of Marshal St Cyr was still in the highest degree precarious."

"And what," inquired Napoleon, "is the Duke of Bassano's opinion?"

"Sire, the Duke thinks the town cannot be defended for twenty-four hours."

"And what do you think?"

"I think, Sire, that Dresden will have fallen to-morrow if your Majesty is not there."

"May I depend upon your report?"

"Sire, I answer for it with my head."

This information decided the direction of the movement. Leaving Vandamme with 30,000 men to execute the operation in rear of the Allied Army, the Emperor hastened with all the other corps to the relief of the threatened capital.

The defences of the old town of Dresden, situated on the left bank of the Elbe, consisted of an exterior line of entrenchments, and the remains of the fortifications which had formerly enclosed the principal part of the city. The exterior line was composed of seven redoubts, skilfully connected by the numerous garden and villa walls that surround the suburbs, and which had all been loop-holed and banquetted. The old fortifications—the interior line—had also been repaired, armed, and placed in the best state of defence that time and circumstances would permit. Speaking generally, the post might be termed strong; but it is admitted on all hands, that twenty-five thousand men

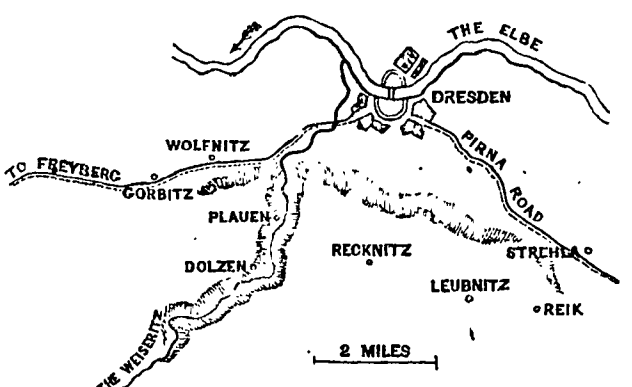
could not possibly have maintained it against 200,000 provided with 500 pieces of artillery.

Nor was the experiment ever tried; for it was only after the French Guards and the leading columns of the troops who had arrived by forced marches from Silesia, had rested some hours in the streets, that the Allies moved on to the attack. The onset was made by five columns, amounting in all to 50,000 men, and provided with 120 pieces of artillery. Their guns opened with considerable effect on the entrenchments, the flames already broke out in the suburbs, and shells, falling in the city, occasioned alarm and confusion. Several of the advanced works had been carried, and some of the assailants even penetrated to the houses of the suburbs; but no real impression had been made, when about six o'clock Napoleon gave orders for a general sally. The gates were thrown open, and on all points columns of the Guard and of St Cyr's troops rushed against the assailants, who, thrown suddenly from the offensive to the defensive, were quickly dispossessed of their conquests, and forced, under constant and heavy fighting, to fall back on the position of the main army. Darkness alone put an end to the combat.

After the battle, Napoleon retired to the palace and supped with the King of Saxony. St Cyr, who speaks of him as far from calm and composed during the day, describes him as then in high spirits. In our humble opinion, a great man would rather have been in high spirits—calm and composed at least—during the action, and depressed and agitated even after success had been achieved; for the slightest modern victory is surely attended with enough of human suffering to wring the heart of the most obdurate conqueror.

The Allies, rendered fully aware of Napoleon's pre-

sence in Dresden by the events of the combat, and expecting to be again attacked on the following morning, prepared for battle accordingly. Their army formed a vast semicircle nearly ten miles in extent, both extremities of which reached nearly to the Elbe. The main body stood on the heights of Recknitz, about three miles from the city. The right wing, under Kleist and Wittgenstein, reached to the village of Reik, situated between the Dohna and Pirna roads. The Russian and Prussian Guards were in reserve, ready to support this wing. Only General Roth stood with 5000 Russians in advance on the Pirna road, along which he was to fall back if attacked; and it was the intention of the allied commander to assail the right flank of any corps of the enemy that might pursue these troops so far as to place itself between the Elbe and the main body of the Allies.



The left wing was less advantageously posted, and was separated from the main body by the long, steep, and narrow ravine of Plauen, at the bottom of which

flows the Weiseritz, a rock-banked streamlet with few practicable points of passage. As this left wing was only composed of the Austrian corps of Giulay with some regiments of Klenau's, the main body of which had not arrived, its entire strength did not amount to 25,000 men; and it was much too weak therefore to occupy the ground from the village of Dolzen on the ravine of Plauen, where its right was posted, to the banks of the Elbe; and could thus be turned by its left, as actually happened.

During the night, Napoleon rode through the bivouacs of his army, which, by the arrival of the last columns, had increased to 130,000 men, and was encamped in a semicircle beyond the redoubts that surrounded the suburbs. Returned from this inspection, he dictated to Berthier the disposition for the next day's battle. It was to the following effect:

The King of Naples, with the whole of the cavalry, that of the Guard excepted, was to assail the left of the Austrians, and while Marshal Victor attacked them in front with the infantry, turn their flank, and endeavour to cut them off from the road to Freyberg.

The corps of Marshal Marmont was ordered to take a defensive position in the centre, where the reserves of the Guard and the artillery were also to be stationed.

On the left, Marshal Ney with the cavalry of the Guard, four divisions of the young Guard, and Marshal St Cyr's corps, was to execute the same movement against the right wing of the Allies, which the King of Naples was executing against their left.

The onset commenced with the rays of morning. The French, passing between the Elbe and the extreme left of the Austrians, at the same time that the villages of Wölfnitz and Corbitz, situated in the centre of the

left wing, were attacked in front, completely overthrew the corps of Giulay; forced those who were nearest the ravine of Plauen to seek shelter behind the main body of the army, and obliged a great part of the division of Mezko to lay down their arms. The Austrians had few cavalry on this point; and the heavy rain that was falling prevented the infantry from making any efficient use of their muskets against Murat's numerous horsemen. Eight thousand prisoners, with sixteen pieces of artillery, here fell into the hands of the victorious French.

In the centre, the action was confined to a cannonade; but on the left, Marshal Ney maintained a sanguinary and undecided combat against the Russians and Prussians. General Roth assailed by the young Guard, fell back before them, disputing the ground in gallant style; and General Kleist not only repulsed the attack made by St Cyr on his position at Leubnitz, but drove the assailants with great loss back to Strehlen.

The Guard, following the footsteps of General Roth, had continued to advance along the Pirna road, and had towards evening placed itself between the Elbe and the extreme right of the Allies; in the exact position in which, according to Schwarzenberg's original disposition, the enemy should be attacked. The moment for striking the blow had now arrived; the main forces of the Allies had never been engaged, and here was an isolated French corps liable to be fallen upon by vastly superior numbers before it could be supported; it had, besides, the Elbe in its rear, and was almost certain of being destroyed if overthrown in the unequal combat; and yet the resolution to attack it failed completely. The opportunity of retrieving the disasters sustained on the left was fairly offered; but the courage to seize

Fortune by the forelock was wanting, and the fickle goddess will not be slighted with impunity. The cause which induced the Allies to deviate from their original disposition, and forego the only chance of restoring the battle, has never been explained. Some writers ascribe it to the fall of General Moreau, who had been wounded two hours before; but this is not very probable, for it is now known, that he exercised little or no influence in the army, was esteemed but indifferently by those who approached him, and was not likely, by his mere removal from the field, to cause an important operation to be relinquished, had there been otherwise any very firm resolution to persevere with the execution.

The reason of the abandonment of this promising movement may be looked for in the character of Schwarzenberg. At no time a bold and enterprising commander, however brave as a man, he was intimidated by the high responsibility that rested upon him, and by the reverses sustained on the left; and certain that success would ultimately crown the Allied cause, if no signal defeat was sustained, he acted on the plan of never risking the chances of an overwhelming disaster. Already informed that Vandamme had passed the Elbe at Königstein, and was forcing the troops of General Ostermann to fall back along the high road to Peterswald and Töplitz, he resolved to commence his retreat on the following morning, and extricate the army from the unfavourable position in which it was placed. A council of war, composed of the Allied sovereigns and their principal officers, assembled indeed in a ploughed field, under torrents of rain, to deliberate on measures which were already determined upon. The King of Prussia—the sovereign of a small country then making vast sacrifices for its independence, and on which the

contest pressed with such fearful severity—was naturally anxious for a speedy termination of the struggle, and objected strongly to the retreat. He urged an immediate attack on the left wing of the French, the continuance of the contest, and a general action for the following morning. The Emperor Alexander and several officers supported these views; but the opinion of the Austrian Field-Marshal prevailed against the wishes of sovereigns who could have commanded: and the action, which had sunk down to a mere cannonade, was allowed to close with the closing day, when orders were given for the general retreat of the army. Some corps already left the field on the same evening; the main body of the forces on the following morning.

Such was the termination of the great battle of Dresden: it cost the Allies nearly 25,000 men in killed, wounded, and missing; but numbers of the latter being only stragglers, soon rejoined their colours. Twenty-six guns, eighteen standards, and one hundred and thirty ammunition-waggons, fell into the hands of the victors; who, on their part, lost about 12,000 in the action. Whatever Napoleon's biographers have said in praise of the splendid military genius displayed in these operations, may be answered by the admitted fact, that the hesitation of the Allies alone saved Dresden from being captured on the 25th; and that the position in which the Emperor had placed his army was so very unfavourable, that he derived no benefit from the advantage so gallantly achieved by his troops. An ill-aimed blow was parried at the expense of thousands of gallant lives; but so faulty was his situation, that success brought no relief: and history will never acknowledge as victorious proofs of military genius, sanguinary battles unattended with results commensurable to the loss at which they have been purchased.

It would very far exceed our limits to enter into any examination of the many errors ascribed to the Allies on this occasion. Their tardiness to strike, after the resolution to attack had been formed, was no doubt an essential fault, but not the only one committed. The position of the left wing, cut off from support by the ravine of Plauen, and scattered over an extent of ground possessing no strength in itself, and too wide to be properly occupied by so small a force, was also reprehensible. Schwarzenberg has farther been blamed for keeping the main body of his army totally inactive, while detached corps were engaged with the principal forces of the enemy; and lastly, for not falling upon the left of the French under Marshal Ney, when the opportunity offered. All these charges seem fairly established; but the objections urged against the resolution to retire are by no means so satisfactory. That a retrograde movement was attended with great danger, is true; equally true it is, that the army only escaped signal disaster, if not entire destruction, by Napoleon's want of ability in not availing himself of the favourable chances offered. But, in the first place, the position of the army, already cut off from its direct lines of supply, having a victorious enemy and a fortress in its front, was in the highest degree precarious and unpromising: and though the retreat over bad mountain roads, rendered worse by the state of the weather, was no doubt attended with danger, the imminent peril to which the troops became exposed, resulted, as we shall see, from the disobedience of one of their principal officers,—a circumstance hardly anticipated by the commanders of a disciplined army.

CHAPTER IV.

BATTLE OF CULM: NAPOLEON'S INJUSTICE TO HIS SUBORDINATES. HE PROJECTS AN ATTACK ON BERLIN, AND MARCHES TO HOYERSWARDA: IS RECALLED BY THE ADVANCE OF BLUCHER: PURSUES THE SILESIAN ARMY, AND THEN RETURNS TO DRESDEN.

BEFORE leaving Stolpen, on the morning of the 26th, Napoleon had despatched General Haxo of the Engineers with instructions to General Vandamme. We give the tenor of the orders in the Emperor's own words as they are reported to us.

"There is Vandamme," he said to Haxo, "who is to cross the Elbe at Königstein, and throw himself in the rear of the enemy."

"I intended to have supported this movement with the whole army, and this would probably have been the shortest way of settling accounts with my enemies. But the situation of Dresden alarms me, and I will not sacrifice that city: I only require a few hours to reach it; though it is not without regret I abandon my original plan for the purpose of marching to its aid."

"But Vandamme has still sufficient forces"—he had 30,000 men—"to inflict a great loss on the enemy. From Pirna he is to move on Gieshübel, and occupy the heights of Peterswald. He is to take possession of all the defiles, and await in that unassailable position

the events about to take place beneath the walls of Dresden."

"It will be for him to gather up the sword of the vanquished. But he must remain cool and collected, and not allow himself to be deceived by the noise of the flying enemy. Explain to Vandamme what my views are, and what I expect from him. He will never have a better opportunity of gaining his Marshal's staff."

On the evening of the 26th, Schwarzenberg was already informed that troops were passing the Elbe at Königstein, and ordered Count Ostermann's Russian corps stationed at Pirna to be augmented in consequence. And when the general retreat of the army was next day resolved upon, the Russian commander was directed to fall back along the high road from Pirna to Peterswald; a movement already attended with difficulty: for the French issuing from Königstein, intercepted the road with some light troops, and though Ostermann soon cleared it, he had still to maintain a severe struggle against his pursuers. This Russian force consisted of only 15,000 men, while Vandamme had double the number under his command: and the French General, aware that all Napoleon's Guards had reached Pirna, thought himself well supported, and pressed the pursuit with unabating vigour; his orders, as we shall see, being to enter Bohemia and occupy Töplitz.

When the Allied Army left the fatal field of Dresden, they were commanded to retire,—the left wing by Rabenau, Pretchendorf, Sayda, and Marienberg; the centre and main body of the Austrians, by Dippoldswilda and Altenberg; and the right, composed of Russians and Prussians under Barclay de Tolly, by Dohna, whence they were to move along the high road leading from Pirna to Peterswald and Töplitz. Had Barclay de

Tolly obeyed the order, and joined Ostermann's corps on the Pirna road, the force in that direction would have been strong enough to make head both against Vandamme and the French Guards; but the Russian commander, conceiving that he might be placed in great peril if the French pushed rapidly along the Pirna road, that he might even be cut off and encompassed by the principal part of their army,—which, had they followed the pursuit vigorously, was very possible,—took upon himself to disobey the orders of the Field-Marshal, and, to save his own corps, endangered that of the whole army. Directing Kleist with the Prussians to fall back by Maxen, he threw himself into the Altenberg road, already encumbered with the whole of the baggage, and with the main body of the Austrian troops: and thus occasioned an excess of confusion that seemed almost inextricable.

Trains of baggage and artillery broke up the roads, already rendered deep and difficult by the heavy rains that had fallen. Different corps, and different arms, cavalry and infantry, were mixed together: crowds of stragglers, Austrians, Russians, Prussians, impeded the progress of the columns. Officers and soldiers were dissatisfied; none, when they did obey, would obey orders except from their own immediate superiors; supplies of all kinds were wanting, and discord was at its height. The council of the sovereigns did not even escape the dangerous contagion; and Mr Alison, who has excellent authority on this point, assures us, that the stability of the alliance was threatened, and that overtures from Napoleon would hardly, at that moment, have been rejected.

Schwarzenberg, conscious how feeble his authority was under such circumstances, made no attempt to ar-

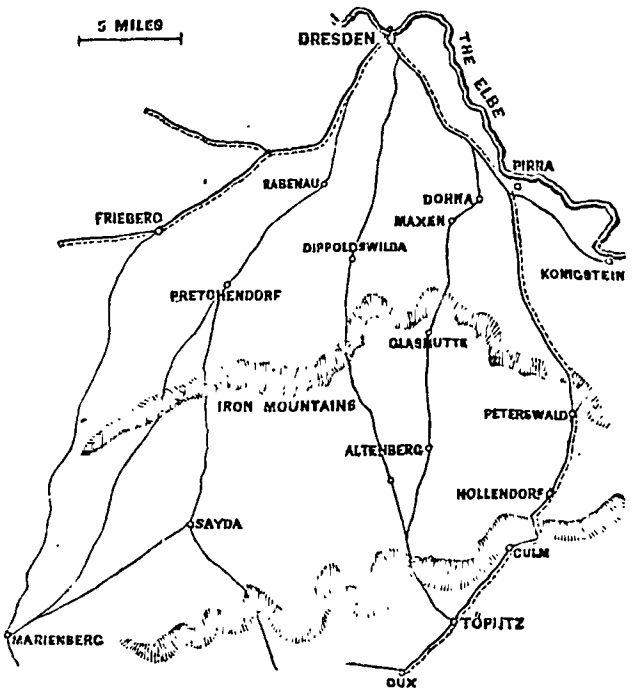
rest the progress of discontent, and waited calmly for some favourable opportunity to give a better direction to the wild spirit which evil fortune had awakened. And with this opportunity his very adversaries—the men who had so long been deemed soldiers of skill and science—soon furnished him.

Napoleon, after inspecting the field of battle on the morning of the 28th, gave directions for pursuing the enemy. But the tardiness of the movements promised no very brilliant result to his future operations; for the allied rear-guards only left their ground at ten o'clock in the morning, and were not, even then, very quickly followed by the French. St Cyr's corps was ordered to Dohna, the Guards to Pirna, to which latter place the Emperor proceeded in person.

And here it was that for the last time Fortune offered him a fair opportunity to redeem his fame, and save the vast power so lavishly conferred upon him: but Napoleon could only receive, and not merit favours; and here, as on every other occasion where success was to result from his actions or energy, he was found an absolute dwarf, unable to support the gigantic reputation which an extraordinary combination of events had thrust upon him.

It was now in his power to lead the Guards and Vandamme's corps, forming a body of more than 60,000 men, directly upon Töplitz, situated in the plain into which open the mountain defiles and broken roads by which the Allies were dragging their slow and wounded length along. He was on the high road that, from its superior condition, might be termed the chord of the arch round which the vanquished were forced to move. There was nothing capable of arresting his progress: Ostermann's feeble division was alone in his front; and had the Allies

been vigorously pressed by the pursuing corps of Murat, Marmont, Victor, and St Cyr, and found on descending



the mountains the outlets of the passes already in possession of the French, they would certainly have been placed in a situation of the most imminent peril. Cooped up without supplies in wild and barren districts, the columns in confusion, and separated from each other by intervening mountain masses that rendered all accurate co-operations impossible, it is difficult to see how such multitudes could have escaped a fate unparalleled in history; unparalleled, at least, since myriads of Per-

sians fell or fled before the Macedonian spears in the corse-encumbered defiles of the Issus.

But though there was no want of Macedonian valour in the ranks of the French army, the Allies were not Persians: above all, Napoleon bore no resemblance to the heroic son of Philip, or his worshippers would not have been reduced to the disgraceful necessity of falsifying history for the purpose of concealing the incapacity of their idol. Generosity would willingly draw a veil over the personal faults of the great conqueror of Asia, of "the youth who all things but himself subdued;" but the heroism of the soldier and the genius of the leader need no aid from falsehood or fiction, and shine brightly to this day, even through the mist of two thousand years.

But what will posterity say of Napoleon, who not only turned his back upon the battle-field to which glory pointed with the promise of almost certain victory, but calumniated his subordinates in order to conceal his own shame and incapacity? Arrived at Pirna on the afternoon of the 28th, the Emperor enquired into the events which had taken place during the previous day; having then seen the Guards march past, he turned to Count Lobau, saying, "Well, there is nothing more to be done here: make the old Guard return to Dresden, the young Guard will remain here in bivouac;" and then entering his carriage he drove off to Dresden in the highest possible spirits, leaving Fortune to deal with Vandamme and his 30,000 soldiers, even as the fickle goddess might think proper.

That unhappy General, believing himself supported by the Guards and by Marshal St Cyr's corps, pressed gallantly forward against Ostermann's troops; who, as brave as their enemies, defended the ground step by

step, and with the most stubborn resolution. But numbers prevailed; and on the evening of the 28th the French had already gained Hellendorff. On the following morning they attacked and carried Peterswald, and driving the Russians before them, arrived under constant fighting at Culm, in the plain of Töplitz. General Ostermann, sensible of his inability to offer permanent resistance to so superior an enemy, warned the allied authorities of their approaching danger. The corps diplomatique instantly left the town; the Emperor of Austria departed for Lauen; but the King of Prussia, requesting Ostermann to take up the best position he could, and to hold his ground to the last, as the Emperor Alexander was still with the army in the mountains, sent officers to hurry the march of whatever troops might be encountered, and then hastened in person to join the Russians on the field of battle.

General Ostermann, fully aware of the important duty that devolved upon him, took up a position near the village of Priestern, about three miles in front of Töplitz, and the best that his small force could occupy with any prospect of advantage.

Vandamme, finding the enemy at bay, aware how important time was at the moment, and sensible that the peril only would make the Russians stand the unequal combat, rushed upon them with his advanced guard, and without waiting for the main body of his corps. The stubborn resistance of Ostermann and his troops, composed in a great part of Russian guards, the flower of the army, foiled the efforts of the French, who suffered for their rashness and temerity; but as their columns closed up, the action was renewed with additional bitterness. Both commanders were conscious of

the mighty stakes resting on the issue of the contest, and on both sides the troops supported the efforts of their leaders with the most heroic gallantry. Many are the combats that a thousand years of Bohemian story prove to have been fought in these border valleys: the fiery Slavonian there maintained his conquests against the chivalry of Charlemagne; in many a wild fight the savage Hussites there foiled the efforts of imperial Germany; and again and again Protestant and Catholic battle-shouts there swelled the gale, while for thirty years fanatic zeal swept with exterminating fury through these lonely glens; but often as blood had steeped the fertile soil, it never had been shed in combat fought more true and bold, than the one so sternly maintained on this occasion.

The details of the action interest us little, compared with its results: it is enough to say, that the bravest efforts of the French were unable to break the firmness of the Russians; the soldiers fell thick and fast on the ground on which they fought, but yielded not a single step: grape and musketry were thinning their ranks, but could not subdue them. Superior numbers were gradually, however, turning the scale in favour of the assailants: the heroic Ostermann was wounded and forced to leave the field; and where valour was equal, victory was about to decide in favour of the many, when General Diebitch arrived on the ground with two regiments of cavalry, charged and overthrew a French column that was preparing to strike the decisive blow, and thus induced Vandamme, as night was closing, to desist from farther efforts.

Still confident of being supported by the Guards and by St Cyr's corps, the French commander assembled his troops round Culm, preparatory to a renewed assault

on the following morning; but the opportunity was lost, and ruin was now impending over those who had neglected to seize victory while within their reach. The Guards had been halted; the march of St Cyr had been altered, and that General had already lost sight of the Prussians; the other pursuing corps had pressed feebly on the vanquished; and the Allies were quietly entering the plain of Töplitz, ready to overwhelm the single corps thrust madly forward into what might have been the very den of their despair.

Schwarzenberg arrived on the field, and immediately congratulated the sovereigns on the certainty of victory in the approaching combat. With tact and judgment equal to his generosity, he conferred on Barclay de Tolly the command of the troops destined to attack Vandamme: thus giving that officer, of whom he had so much reason to complain—whose disobedience had actually endangered the safety of the army, an opportunity not only of atoning for his fault, but of acquiring distinguished honour also; and he who thus gained a victory over himself, well deserved to gain one over the enemy.

All night, Austrian and Russian troops continued to pour into the plain; and orders were sent to General Kleist, directing him to hasten the march of his Prussians, and arrive in time to share the honours of the battle. The officer who carried this order found the roads so completely encumbered with artillery and waggons of every description, that he was forced to dismount and make his way on foot; but these obstacles damped not the zeal of the Prussian commander, who declared that he would cross the summit of the mountains, rather than fail the cause in danger's hour: a resolution as bravely acted upon as it had been formed.

It is said that many French officers advised Vandamme to retire during the night, and avoid the unequal combat the following day was certain to bring. The enterprising General, believing that he would be supported, confident that he was on the high road to victory—the only road indeed by which the French could strike any decisive blow, resolved to persevere. In doing so, he was following the spirit as well as the letter of his instructions; he was commanded to "gather up the sword of the vanquished," and could not return without the ordered trophy.

Day dawned at last, and the first rays of light already served as a signal for the swarms of skirmishers dispersed through the woods and groves that traverse the lovely vale of Belin, to commence the work of death. Nor was the sterner combat long delayed. On both flanks, Austrians and Russians intermixed advanced to the onset; and though the intersected nature of the ground favoured the French, who had besides occupied it with skill, they were soon forced back on both points. Assailed by numbers as superior as those with which they had themselves been the assailants on the previous day, they fought with the same valour which had been displayed against them. Pressed back on the left, almost to the verge of the Peterswald road, their only line of retreat, they still presented a bold front, expecting every moment to be relieved by the arrival of Napoleon and his Guards. The report of loud explosions rolling over from the heights of Nollendorff, were taken for the sound of artillery announcing his march, and heavy columns moving rapidly along the Dresden road, seemed to confirm the happy delusion. But it was of short duration, and Prussian banners soon proclaimed that hopes of aid were vain, that foes and not friends were advancing, and

that retreat itself could now be effected only at sword's point.

From early morning, Kleist and the Prussians had been on the march; reports informed the General that the road by Giersberg to Töplitz had been cleared of obstacles during the night, and was then passable; but this distinguished officer, concluding justly that he should strike a more decisive blow by falling on the rear of the enemy, than by moving round to join the troops engaged in their front, persisted in his first resolution; and at the risk of encountering Napoleon's army on the march to aid Vandamme, he crossed the very summit of the mountains, threw himself into the high Peterswald road, on which he captured and blew up a convoy of ammunition, and then hastening on to join the fray, placed the French completely between two fires.

Their situation was now desperate; but even in that hour of fear, officers and soldiers were true to the fame acquired in so many gallant actions. Vandamme, forming his troops in one solid column, commanding the artillery to continue their fire to the last against the Austrians and Russians, hurled the whole mass against the advancing Prussians, trusting to bear down these new adversaries before they could assume a good defensive posture. The leading battalions of Kleist's corps were shivered by the fury of the onset; but Barclay de Tolly, perceiving the retrograde movement of the French, instantly pressed upon them with the centre of his force which had not yet been engaged; the Austrian cavalry charged and broke the massy columns of the foe, and swept them from the plain right in upon the advancing Prussians. The woods, gorge, and ravines of Telnitz, now received the victors and the vanquished,

the fighting and the flying: for a brief space, the storm of battle rose wild and shrill above the forest and the mountain; and when silence again sunk down upon the woodland scene, Vandamme's corps had ceased to exist: 10,000 men lay stretched upon the field; an equal number, including Vandamme and several other generals, were captives; the rest, throwing away their arms to facilitate their flight, escaped through the woods, and were taken up by the Guards and St Cyr's corps. The whole of the artillery fell into the hands of the conquerors.

This victory, though not achieved without loss, was of incalculable advantage to the Allies: it avenged the defeat sustained beneath the walls of Dresden; it gave lustre to their arms, restored the confidence of officers and soldiers, and completely healed the fatal dissensions previous reverses had occasioned. The battle of Culm may be said to have turned the fate of the war; for it was the last opportunity ever offered to Napoleon for regaining his supremacy over Europe.

And how was the vaunted leader occupied while hostile arms were mowing down the ranks of his soldiers almost within his hearing? Was he straining every nerve to bring aid and support to the gallant men fighting and falling in his cause? Not so indeed: he was occupied as the most callous and ignoble only could be at such a moment, even as he was occupied at Smolensko, when the cannon of Valutino, tolling the knell of thousands who perished to uphold his fortunes, shook the earth around him. Death was busy in the plain of Culm; but at Dresden Napoleon was leisurely engaged in dictating bulletins to announce victories, the fruits of which were already lost;—in preparing with the Duke of Bassano a message to the Senate, "intended not only to acquaint that assembly with the failure of

the negotiation at Prague, but to serve as a guide to public opinion."

According to Baron Fain, the Emperor, pausing from these labours, reverted to military subjects, and addressed himself to Berthier. "At this moment," he said, "Marmont and St. Cyr must have driven the Austrian rear-guards to Töplitz; they will there receive the last ransom of the enemy. We cannot be long in hearing news of Vandamme, and we shall then know what advantage he has derived from his fine position. It is by him that we shall finish in that quarter. I shall leave some corps of observation on the frontier, and recal the rest to head-quarters. I calculate, that after the disaster experienced at Dresden, it will require at least three weeks before Schwarzenberg's army can be reorganized and rendered fit to take the field: more time than I need to execute my projected movement upon Berlin."

At last the arrival of General Corbineau, who had commanded the French cavalry in the battle of Culm, put an end to these speculations. Wounded and covered with blood, still armed with the Prussian sabre which in the *mêlée* he had exchanged for his own, that officer made his way to the Emperor and gave him a full account of the disaster. Napoleon received it calmly. "Well, you hear it?" he said to the Duke of Bassano; "thus it is in war. High in the morning, low enough at night: from a triumph to a fall is often but a step." Then, taking the compasses in his hand, he mused long on the map, repeating unconsciously the lines of Corneille:—

"J'ai servi, commandé, vaincu quarante années;
Du monde entre mes mains, j'ai vue les destinées:

Et j'ai toujours connù qu'en chaque évènement,
Le destin des états dependait d'un moment."

"What Napoleon cannot understand," continues Fain, "is the motive which could have induced Vandamme to descend into the plain of Töplitz." "To a flying enemy," he repeated, "you must build a golden bridge or oppose an iron barrier; and Vandamme could not oppose that iron barrier." Then turning to the Major-general—"Can we," he said, "have written any thing which could have suggested to him this fatal resolution? Berthier, bring your letter-book; Fain, let us examine mine." Berthier immediately brings his book of orders; the Secretary of the Cabinet shows his letters: all are examined, but nothing is found which could have authorised the unhappy General to forsake his position at Peterswald.

We think our examination will prove more successful; and show, not only the discreditable conduct of Napoleon in throwing on his subordinates the blame of his own errors, but the readiness also of his idolaters, to set truth at defiance whenever his fame and reputation are to be upheld.

We have seen, that on leaving Stolpen, Napoleon ordered Vandamme to cross the Elbe, act in rear of the enemy, "and gather up the sword of the vanquished:" a task in which he was specially encouraged by the hopes of gaining the Marshal's *baton*, the fair prospect of which was distinctly held out to him. But "the sword of the vanquished" was not to be "gathered up" on the heights of Peterswald; a few Russian knapsacks left, perchance, by Ostermann's corps, were the only trophies likely to be found on those barren hills. Had Vandamme been detached to enjoy an agreeable view of the ease and

facility with which the unpursued Allies issued from the mountain passes, and reformed their broken columns in the plain of Töplitz, then, indeed, the position of Petershwald would have proved the very best that could have been selected; but for all other purposes it was totally useless. Nor was it ever intended that any force should halt there; this was only, as we shall see, an afterthought devised to throw the blame of the disaster on the defeated General.

On the morning of the 28th, Napoleon acquaints Vandamme, "that the Guards are marching on Pirna and St Cyr's corps on Dohna, and that 30,000 *prisoners and* 40 *pieces of artillery* have been taken from the vanquished enemy."

At half-past four o'clock in the evening he sends the following order in a letter dated a league from Pirna:—"The Emperor desires you will assemble the forces he places at your disposal, penetrate into Bohemia, and overthrow the Prince of Wurtemberg, should he attempt to oppose your progress. The enemy whom we have defeated seems to be retiring upon Annaberg, and his Majesty thinks that you may arrive before him on the communication of Teschen, Aussig, and Töplitz, and thus capture his stores, baggage, equipages, and whatever marches in rear of an army," &c.

Vandamme, writing at half-past eight o'clock on the same evening, thus expresses himself:—"We have arrived at Hellendorff. The enemy made vain efforts to oppose our brave young soldiers; he has been everywhere overthrown and routed. I have about 4000 or 5000 men before me. I attack them at daybreak in the morning, and march upon Töplitz with the whole of the first corps, unless I receive orders to the contrary."

At this time Napoleon was at Dresden, which is only

four and a half German miles—less than twenty-five English—from Hellendorff, and no staff officer could well take four hours in galloping that distance along the straight or open high road; he must, therefore, have received the letter before or by midnight, and had, consequently, ample time to send a counter-order had he been so disposed; but none appears, nor is the least mention made of any having been written, or intended to have been written. It is clear, therefore, that Napoleon approved of the march on Töplitz; for even his idolaters will not maintain that the commander of an army would altogether, even in the sublime conceptions so often boasted of, forget a body of 30,000 men, or allow them, when perfectly within call, to execute a movement of which he disapproved.

It may almost be said, indeed, that the reverse is the case; for on the 30th we find Napoleon issuing the following order:—"Inform the Duke of Ragusa, the King of Naples, the Duke of Belluno, and Marshal St Cyr, that Zinnwald is the most difficult point for the enemy. The country people all agree in thinking that nothing but extraordinary exertions will enable him to get his baggage and artillery through the pass. It is on this point, therefore, they must combine and attack; and the enemy, turned by General Vandamme, who is marching on Töplitz, will be greatly embarrassed, and most likely obliged to abandon all his *materiel*."

Here, then, we find Napoleon not only commanding Vandamme to advance into Bohemia, but informing the Marshals of the circumstance, and directing them to act in conformity with that General's march upon Töplitz. Let us now see the direct and barefaced denial of all these orders. Writing to Marshal St Cyr on the 1st of September, this ignoble sovereign thus accuses the ill-

fated commander whom he believes to have fallen :— "This unhappy Vandamme, who appears to have got himself killed, had left neither sentinel nor reserve upon the heights, and had rushed into a hollow without looking round in any direction. If he had only left four battalions and four pieces of artillery on the mountains, this misfortune could not have happened. I had given him positive orders to entrench himself on the heights, to encamp his corps, and only to send parties into Bohemia for the purpose of alarming the enemy." Yet this is the man in whose favour so many writers have actually attempted to falsify history!

Nor is the accusation of Vandamme the only device they have fallen upon to save Napoleon's credit on this occasion. They tell us, that he was taken so ill at Pirna on the afternoon of the 28th, as actually to occasion suspicions of poison having been administered to him, and was placed in his carriage, and conveyed to Dresden a complete invalid. There is, however, much better authority for denying than for asserting the fact. Baron Odleben, whose perfect impartiality has never been questioned, and whose book is well known, and has been translated into several languages, speaks as an eye-witness, when he informs us that Napoleon was in high spirits when, as before related, he entered his carriages after seeing the Guard file past at Pirna. Lieutenant-General Gersdorff, chief of the Saxon staff, whose admiration of Napoleon is amply attested by the very journal to which we here appeal, is another sufficient witness. He had an interview with the Emperor on the evening of the same day, and says not one syllable about this indisposition. "On arriving at Dresden," are his words, "Napoleon immediately waited on the King of Saxony; he then dined and sent for me. He spoke a

great deal, principally of the events that had taken place, and seemed rather anxious about Vandamme."* Besides, though illness might have prevented him from accompanying the Guard, it could hardly prevent him from sending them forward; and we find him issuing various orders on the 29th; but none directing the first corps to be either halted or supported in its advanced movement: and there was still on that day ample time for the purpose. It was only on the 30th that serious doubts of Vandamme's safety entered Napoleon's mind: he then directed Mortier to advance with the young Guard towards Nollendorff; but the blow had been already struck, and they had not marched long before their progress was arrested by the tidings of defeat, brought by the fugitives from the very field of slaughter.

Though certainly not inclined to pardon the dishonourable falsehoods here exposed, we are but slightly surprised to find Napoleon and his panegyrists using every effort to conceal the gross and glaring errors by which the fruits of the battle of Dresden were completely forfeited, and which, if properly examined, should deprive their author of all claim to genius and military talent. If it is always a great fault to build a golden bridge for a vanquished enemy, to whom an iron barrier can be opposed, it is doubly so when, as was the case with Napoleon, the situation of the victor is such that the most striking and decisive results only can better his condition. But leisurely to follow the Allies to the entrance of the Bohemian passes, which at every step presented the rear-guards of the vanquished columns with advantageous positions for defence,—without at the same

* Zeitgenossen Dritte Reihe, vol. v.

time having the outlets of the defiles, which are steep and difficult on the Bohemian side, well watched and guarded,—was to forfeit all the real advantages of the success gained before the walls of Dresden. To be satisfied with the empty honour of pursuing an enemy, in slow and stately style, over a few leagues of country, and to desist at the very moment when a severe blow might have been struck, was to reduce the victory to the mere repulse of a sally made from the Bohemian fastnesses, and which, under the same protection, might be renewed whenever the conquered had restored their order; even as troops sallying from a fortress find a safe retreat under the protection of their works, and, victors or vanquished, fall back without in the least endangering the safety of the garrison.

Situated as the belligerent parties were at the moment of which we are writing, nothing but a decisive victory gained over the Grand Army could save Napoleon. After the battle of Dresden, events offered him the fairest possible opening for achieving such a victory: he must, for months together, have been studying the ground and maps of the surrounding country,—studying what his biographers in their strategical jargon term his *echiquier*,—and yet this boasted leader could not perceive the golden opportunity when it was so clearly presented to his view! Nor was this oversight like one of those which may be committed and more readily pardoned in the battle-field, where, for a few minutes, an opportunity is sometimes presented, and as quickly withdrawn if not instantly seized upon; for here the opening remained at his disposal during the whole of the 28th and 29th, almost to the morning of the 30th of August, without any advantage being taken of it. To some extent the Emperor admitted this himself; for, on

the 7th September, he told St Cyr, as the latter informs us, "that he might have found an opportunity of striking a blow in the neighbourhood of Töplitz, if he had supported Vandamme on the 28th, instead of halting the Guard at Pirna."

The reproach urged on this point against Napoleon is, not that he proved himself destitute of the high military genius which discerns coming events through the very mist by which they are shrouded, and is prepared to strike and smite before ordinary observers perceive the foe against whom the blow is aimed; the reproach is here of a far graver character: it is, that he did not even know how and when to apply the most common-place rules or principles of the science of war when the opportunity presented itself; and was thus guilty of a gross and flagrant error, which would have been charged as such against the most common-place drill-ground commander. But he who could not follow the banner that victory waved before him, could libel subordinates, deny his own orders, and assert untruths that fully prove the accuracy of the charges here preferred against him: for no man will resort to falsehood for defence, when truth and honour can be made to plead the cause.

Napoleon, forsaking the substance for the shadow—the overthrow of the Allies for the vain honour of seizing Berlin, was no sooner acquainted with Oudinot's failure, than he resolved to lead the expedition in person against the Prussian capital. And on the 30th August, we already find troops withdrawn from the pursuit of the Bohemian army crossing to the right bank of the Elbe, and marching with the Guards and reserves on Hoyerswerda, where the Emperor's head-quarters were to be established, on the 3d; but news arriving that M'Donald could no longer resist the advance of Blücher,

the columns were instantly wheeled to the right and directed on Bautzen, for the purpose of reinforcing the defeated army of Silesia.

Napoleon himself joined the retiring bands on the 4th, and was greatly displeased on perceiving the condition to which the troops were reduced. He addressed the Generals in harsh terms, and told Sebastiani, that he commanded a mere rabble, to which the latter replied by directly contradicting the Emperor: a circumstance which tends by no means to impress us with any very high idea of the respect entertained for their sovereign by these rude soldiers.

This display of bad manners did not, however, delay the operations of the army, which was immediately countermarched and moved forward against the enemy. Blücher, informed of the arrival of Napoleon's Guards and reserves, immediately retired, according to his instructions, leaving only a few Cossacks and light troops to skirmish with the advancing French.

The forward movement was not of long duration. On the following morning the whole French army were marched out to assail the enemy; but the main body of their forces had again vanished; only a few light cavalry were seen; and Napoleon, now convinced that they were acting on a regular and systematic plan, and had resolved to retire without fighting, relinquished the pursuit. At noon on the 5th, we find the possessor of mighty thrones, exhausted, more perhaps by mental excitement than bodily fatigue, stretched on a bundle of straw in a deserted and half-ruined farm-house by the roadside. Here he long mused in cheerless silence: to him the roar of artillery, announcing the presence of the enemy, and the prospect of a battle, would have been welcome as the rushing sound of water to the wanderer of the

desert; and the warm blood flowing from the veins of gallant men as gladdening to his sight as the sparkling stream to the fainting pilgrim. But all was still and peaceful; and Napoleon, starting from his meditation, flying from his own thoughts perhaps, commanded his Guards and reserves to countermarch and follow him back to Dresden, thus relinquishing both his intended projects before he had struck a single blow, or almost seen an enemy: foiled at all points by the retreat of an adversary on one point.

During the brief period of twenty days, from the 16th August to the 5th September, comprised in these two chapters of the present work, we find the French Guards, reserves, and other troops, under Napoleon's immediate command, engaged in no less than six different operations. First, they are marched into Lusatia to meet the attack of the Grand Allied Army, expected to act on the right bank of the Elbe. Secondly, we find them directed against Blücher, crossing the Bober, and penetrating into Silesia. Thirdly, they are on the march to Stolpen, and intended to fall upon the rear of Schwarzenberg's army engaged before Dresden. Fourthly, we find them hurrying on—always by forced marches—to Dresden, beating the enemy and then pursuing the vanquished by slow marches. Fifthly, they are on the march to Hoyerswerda preparatory to the attack on Berlin. Sixthly, we see them wheeled to the right, and hastening on to Bautzen, in the hopes of engaging Blücher; and lastly, returning to Dresden after fruitless toil, leaving every roadside covered with sick, fainting, and exhausted stragglers!

As already enumerated, the principal actions fought during this short period cost the French army 70,000 men; and if we only add to the melancholy sum ten

thousand more lost in minor combats, endless skirmishes—lost in consequence of fatigue and sickness occasioned by harassing marches, scanty and indifferent food, we find a diminution from the effective of more than 80,000 men since the renewal of hostilities: the army diminishing at the frightful rate of four thousand men a day! Napoleon opened the campaign with the smaller number of troops, but all sources of military strength considered, with the greatest advantages on his side. He occupied a central position, rested upon strong fortresses, commanded an army principally composed of the soldiers of one nation, accustomed to act together, and over which he exercised absolute and undisputed authority. His adversaries were scattered round the circumference of the circle, in the centre of which he stood at bay. The disadvantages under which their armies laboured, we have formerly seen; and such, as the early operations proved, were the jealousies existing among their chiefs, that the success of the cause was more than once endangered by the misconduct of a Langeron, and the disobedience of a Barclay. Nor were the other commanders more distinguished for ability than for harmony: one allowed victory to pass profitless from his hands on the plains of Gross-Beeren, and another feared to strike, when Fortune was actually tendering him a laurel crown from the indefensible walls of Dresden. And is he to be considered a great leader, who, contending against such adversaries, sacrificed nearly a hundred thousand men in twenty days, without gaining the slightest advantage, at a time, and under circumstances, when not to achieve great advantages was an incalculable loss, certain of leading to ultimate ruin?

CHAPTER V.

CONTINUATION OF THE CAMPAIGN: BATTLE OF DENNEWITZ. NAPOLEON'S WAVERING CONDUCT: GREAT SUFFERINGS OF THE FRENCH: BLUCHER FORCES THE PASSAGE OF THE ELBE, AND IS JOINED BY THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN: SCHWARZENBERG LEADS THE GRAND ARMY INTO SAXONY. NAPOLEON LEAVES DRESDEN: HIS STAY AT DUBEN: EXTRAVAGANT PLAN ASCRIBED TO HIM.

THE many errors committed by Napoleon during the Autumn campaign of which we are speaking, arose in a great measure from his eager desire to seize Berlin; and from his making the capture of that city, instead of the destruction of the Grand Allied Army, the constant object of his offensive operations. It was perfectly evident that nothing but a signal victory, achieved over the myriads assembled in Bohemia, could better the situation of the French, or save them from ultimate defeat; and yet we find Napoleon acting always on the defensive against Schwarzenberg, refraining to strike, neglecting to follow up success when the best opportunity presented itself, and with strange infatuation, directing all his efforts against the Prussian capital. As a military post, Berlin was not of the slightest importance; every object that could render it valuable to an enemy had been removed. It was, besides, covered by the army of the Crown Prince of Sweden, and could not be

assailed without bringing that numerous host into play, and forcing the most inactive of all the allied commanders to take a decided part in the contest. At the very commencement of the campaign, Napoleon himself had foretold that Bernadotte would only skirmish. "*Oh, pour celui la,*" he said, "*il ne fera que piff-paffer:*" and every day of the contest tended to prove the justness of the prophecy. But evident as it was that Bernadotte wished rather to wait events than to take a share in directing them, we find Napoleon, though already beset by numerous enemies, actually forcing this most tardy commander into the lists.

The army defeated at Gross-Beeren having been reinforced and augmented to 70,000 men, was placed under the command of Marshal Ney: an officer whose daring and decided character gave full guarantee of the vigour and energy certain of being displayed in the execution of any operation entrusted to his leading. On the present occasion his orders also were positive: he was to attack Berlin. "At Baruth you will be only three days' march from Berlin," says Napoleon, in his letter of the 2d September. "The communication with the Emperor will then be entirely established, and the attack on the Prussian capital may take place on the 9th or 10th instant. All that cloud of Cossacks and rabble of *Landwehr* infantry will quickly disperse, when your march is once decidedly taken: you will perceive the necessity of moving rapidly, in order to take advantage of the present inefficient state* of the Grand Allied Army in Bohemia."

We really find it difficult to credit our eyes when we

* Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire Militaire sous le Directoire le Consulat et l'Empire. Par le Marechal Gouvion St Cyr.

read instructions of this description, sent by a military sovereign to the commander of an army about to engage not only brave and resolute, but victorious foes; the very men in fact who had so lately defeated the army thus ordered to march against them. The "rabble *Landwehr*," so contemptuously spoken of in this letter, had conquered at Gross-Beeren and Hagelberg, and success was not likely to diminish their courage and confidence; and yet we find Napoleon assuring one of his marshals that "this rabble will disperse at his mere approach." Such language would be foolish enough in *bulletins* and proclamations, but when addressed officially to the commander-in-chief of an army of seventy thousand men, it is discreditable in the highest degree; and we shall soon find the soldiers paying dearly for the presumption of their leader.

Marshal Ney, having reviewed his army on the 4th, already on the following day led them forward against the enemy. The advanced posts of the Allies fell back fighting, giving thus ample notice of the movement of the French, who directed their march on Jutterboch, where Tauenzien's corps, the extreme left of the Allied Army, was stationed. The vicinity of the foe considered, the troops of Bernadotte, extending more than five-and-twenty miles from right to left, were certainly too much scattered; but the early intimation received of the French movement gave ample time to assemble them for the approaching combat, had skill or energy been displayed in effecting their junction: it is in vain, however, that we look for any proof of these qualities in the operations of the Crown Prince of Sweden.

General Bülow acted differently, and no sooner perceived that the blow was about to fall on Tauenzien, than he marched to Lipsdorff, and there took post for

the night, ready to fall in upon the left flank of the French if they continued their movement upon Jutterboch. The measures of the Crown Prince were less decisive; for on the evening of the 5th, the Russians were still at Werbig, ten miles from Bülow's position, and the Swedes at Rabenstein, fifteen miles from the same point. No effort was made to close in during the night, and the battle-day added little to the vigour of this strange and dilatory system. The Swedes and Russians, instead of being directed on the scene of action, were first assembled at Lobbese, and then marched to Eckmansdorf, a village ten miles distant, and situated five miles in rear of the scene of conflict; and his Royal Highness moving leisurely to the roar of artillery, which told that a fierce combat was engaged not in the direction of his line of march but far to his right, took the best part of the day to reach even that tranquil station.

Nor was this all: Borstel's Prussian brigade, which had been in observation towards Wittemberg, was ordered by Bülow, the commander of the Prussian troops, to force a march, and join the main body of his corps, in time to share in the action. The Crown Prince, to whom, as commander-in-chief of the whole army, the order was notified, countermanded it, and directed Borstel, who was marching on the fire, to march upon Eckmansdorf and unite with the Swedes and Russians. But the high-minded Prussian declined to receive the order: "Tell his Royal Highness," he said to the messenger, "that General Bülow is exposed to the heaviest fire, and that it is my duty to hasten forward to his assistance. I am moving against the left flank of the enemy, and have already notified my speedy arrival to my countrymen." And well it was that he followed the dictates of honour, and the orders of his immediate superior; for it was his

arrival on the field that decided the action in favour of the cause.

We have entered into these details to show how many were the elements of feebleness existing in the allied armies, owing to a want of subordination, harmony, and often of skill also, among the higher officers; and to a want of mutual confidence which gradually sprang up among the troops of the different nations. Such a state of things necessarily offered many chances of success to an adversary exercising absolute sway over well-disciplined forces, provided there were ability enough to work on the enemy's weakness, and strike promptly and decisively at any point that might be laid bare. But Napoleon could profit as little by the tardy unskilful leading and very suspicious behaviour of the Crown Prince of Sweden, as by the many acts of jealous insubordination already recorded.

The details of the battle of Dennewitz, though highly interesting in a military point of view, can be but slightly touched upon here. Bertrand's corps, forming the van of the French army, had not advanced far beyond Dennewitz and Rohrbeck before they encountered the troops of Tauenzien posted in front of Jutterboch. The Prussians, eager to fight, and aware that assistance was at hand, awaited the onset, and a very severe action commenced. Much blood had already been shed, when Bülow fell in upon the left flank of the enemy, and immediately threw the French back from the offensive to the defensive, and obliged them to present front in two different directions. As troops arrived on both sides, the combat thickened more and more, the French, driven successively from Dennewitz, Rohrbeck, and Golsdorf, were losing ground rapidly, when Oudinot with the twelfth corps recovered the latter village, and restored

their battle for a time. But success was of brief duration ; and Borstel, having reached the ground with eight battalions and eight squadrons, recaptured the post; and the two French lines—the one facing north, the other east—forced back upon each other, fell into confusion, which was rendered complete by the flight of their cavalry. For a time the Saxon and Wittemberg troops, falsely accused by Marshal Ney of having misbehaved in the action, covered the retreat of the army ; but unable to check the torrent of pursuers and pursued, they also broke and were hurried away in the wild rout that followed. Order and subordination vanished completely, —even the commanders differed among themselves: Ney directed the troops to retire on Wittemberg ; Oudinot and Reynier insisted on falling back to Torgau ; and the soldiers, disregarding the authority of their superiors, made their way as best they could, some to the one place some to the other : it was only behind the Elbe that Marshal Ney rallied the broken remains of his army. The vanquished lost upwards of 20,000 men in the conflict, besides about 2000 more taken at Dahme on the morning of the action : their whole army might indeed have been entirely destroyed had the Crown Prince followed up the victory the Prussians had so gallantly achieved.

It is usual to assert that the arrival of the Swedes and Russians, under the immediate command of Bernadotte, decided the fate of the day. This, however, is evidently an exaggeration. That the mere sight of 40,000 men, arriving on a battle-field during a dubious and sanguinary contest, would give victory to the party they came to aid, need not be doubted ; but the battle of Dennewitz was gained before the Crown Prince came in sight of the French: for not to speak of the air being

filled with dust, which during the day almost concealed the contending parties from each other, and being impregnated besides with the sulphury vapours arising from the long continued fire, he drew up his forces behind the village of Dalicho, more than three miles from the scene of action, which he only reached after the combat had completely ceased. Six squadrons of hussars, two battalions of infantry, three Russian and one Swedish battery of artillery, hurried on before the rest of the army, lent the only aid which he furnished to the Prussians on this occasion. The fifty squadrons of unbroken cavalry which, after the close of the action, he led into the field, might have completed the destruction of the vanquished enemy; but they never even drew a sabre in the cause!

The battle of Dennewitz was fought and gained by 47,000 Prussians, contending against more than 60,000 French that actually came into fire, and reflects as much credit on the gallantry of the troops as on the skill, zeal, and energy of the commanders. The conduct of Bülow, brother of the author of the "Modern System of War," and who confessed that he derived all his military knowledge from the works of that unfortunate writer, is spoken of as above all praise; and even Pelet admits that the Prussian Generals manœuvred with the greatest ability.

French historians, anxious at all price to uphold the infallibility of Napoleon, have ascribed the defeat at Dennewitz, and the failure of the expedition against Berlin, to the tardy arrival of Marshal Oudinot, who, with the twelfth corps, only reached the battle-field at two o'clock in the afternoon. The charge of tardiness brought against the Marshal may not be without foundation, and his defence is far from satisfactory; but the

writers who lay so much stress on the *late* arrival of a single French corps, forget the *non*-arrival of more than half the Allied Army who ought to have been present in the field; and on the absence of which neither Napoleon nor any General projecting a plan of attack on Berlin could ever have calculated. If Oudinot was discontented, as it is usual to assert, what can be said of Napoleon, who left that officer to serve in a subordinate capacity in the very army from the chief command of which he had just been removed in a manner that might almost be termed insulting? Could any one possessing the slightest knowledge of human character, have committed such an error at such a moment? The world has been stunned with the praise heaped on Napoleon's pretended skill in appreciating individuals; and yet how vastly inferior, in tact and judgment, was his conduct here to that of Schwarzenberg placing the disobedient Barclay de Tolly in command of the troops certain to conquer at Culm, and of Blücher's reclaiming the envious Langeron by treating his misconduct as an oversight of orders?

The natural consequences of such a succession of errors were now breaking rapidly in upon the French army. Marshal Ney, writing after the battle of Dennewitz, avows, with a degree of frankness highly creditable to him, "that he has been totally defeated." The *morale* of the army, he says, is completely shaken, the cavalry worse than useless, "*and the spirit of the foreign troops so bad, as to leave little doubt of their turning their arms against France on the very first opportunity.*" From Marshal St Cyr the most gloomy reports were also received; writing on the 6th September, he informs the Emperor that the want of provisions is such as to render it impossible to preserve discipline, and keep the troops in

their camps ; and that the Allied Army—which, according to Napoleon's calculation, " was to require at least three weeks before it could recover its organization"—was already preparing to renew the attack on Dresden. It was this intimation which recalled him from the pursuit of Blücher, and proved, what had been perfectly evident from the commencement of the campaign, that his position at Dresden, constantly exposed to attacks of the Bohemian army, was in the highest degree faulty, and could only be redeemed by a decisive victory over Schwarzenberg, which no attempt was even made to achieve.

Forsaking, as we have seen, the pursuit of the Silesian army, Napoleon reached Dresden on the 7th, and proceeded immediately to join St Cyr, who was already falling back before the advancing troops of Wittgenstein. On the part of the Allies, this inroad was only a demonstration ; and they next day retired in their turn, when they found themselves vigorously opposed. The French followed, and on the evening of the 9th, we find the Emperor supping with his marshals at the castle of Lipstadt. It was during this unpromising repast, that the young Duke of Piacenza, Ney's aide-de-camp, brought the official details of the defeat of Dennewitz. " The Emperor," says St Cyr, " interrogated the officer minutely, and entered with the most perfect composure into the movements of the different corps ; after which he explained, in a manner equally vivid and satisfactory, the causes of the reverse, but without evincing the least ill-humour, or manifesting any displeasure against Ney and the Generals engaged. He ascribed the whole to the difficulty of the art of war, which, he said, was far from being generally understood. He added, that he would one day or other, if he had leisure, write a book

on the subject, in which he would demonstrate its principles in so precise a manner, that they should be within reach of all military men, and enable them to learn the art of war as easily as any other." "I replied," continues St Cyr, "that it were much to be wished the experience of such a man should not be lost to France; but that I had always doubted whether it were practicable to form a work of the kind; though if any one could, it was himself. That it seemed extremely doubtful whether the longest practice was the best school in which to learn the art of a commander; for of all the Generals, whether on our side or on that of our enemies, whom we had seen at the head of the armies of Europe during the many wars occasioned by the Revolution,—none appeared to have gained by experience; nor did I make any exception in his own case, as I had always considered his first Italian campaign as his *chef-d'œuvre* in war. He said I was right; and that considering the limited force then at his disposal, he regarded it as his greatest campaign; that he knew but one General who had constantly gained by experience, and that was Turenne, whose great talents were the result of profound study, and who approached nearer the model of excellence he proposed to describe than any other. This conversation was brought on by the recital of one of the greatest disasters of the campaign—a disaster attended with terrible effects to the interest of many, and of none so much as to his own. And he yet spoke of it as calmly as he would have spoken of the affairs of China, or of Europe in the preceding century."

The merit of the species of calmness here so highly praised, we have before had occasion to examine, and we retain the belief then expressed, that it is of a nature having but slight claims to admiration. The assertion,

that the science of war can ever be reduced to positive rules, is completely at variance with the opinions of the most distinguished tactical writers; and Napoleon's total failure as a military author, together with the conversation here quoted, prove indeed that he never possessed a clear, distinct, and well-defined idea on the subject. Every step of the campaign in which he was engaged tends to demonstrate this, and none more indeed than the one of which we have now to speak.

Following the retiring enemy, the Emperor on the 10th reached Ebersdorf in the Erzgebirge, or Iron Mountains; and ascending the Geyersberg or Eagles-cliff, the highest point of the range, he was enabled to survey the plain of Töplitz, and observe the Allied Army: "he could almost," says St Cyr, "count every man in the hostile ranks." From the hurry and confusion which their movements exhibited, it was evident, he adds, "that they were ill prepared for the immediate battle which they seemed to anticipate."

The cause of this confusion and want of preparation, which French historians, always anxious to screen the fame of Napoleon, have carefully omitted to state, arose from the following circumstance. When the Allies became aware of the Emperor's march into Silesia, it was resolved to send 60,000 Austrians across the Elbe, to act in rear of the French; while Klenau, with another Austrian corps, advanced from Comothau to Altenburg to make one of those demonstrations so much in favour at the time. Each of these movements was in progress: and though Schwarzenberg and Klenau both countermarched as soon as tidings of Napoleon's return to Dresden were received, they had not rejoined the Grand Army, when his very unwelcome appearance at Ebersdorf occasioned the confusion and want of pre-

paration mentioned by St Cyr. Nearly the whole of the Austrian troops were absent; the Russians and Prussians alone were in position; and the French, had they advanced, would have found only one-half of the Allied Army to contend with!

Napoleon gazed long and anxiously on the foe: at last, turning from the telescope, he said to St Cyr, "I will not attack the enemy in that position, but you must conceal my intention: continue to repair the road to-day and to-morrow; let every one believe that we are to have a great battle. If you are assailed on the mountain, I shall support you." So saying he returned to Dresden, leaving the marshal in utter astonishment at his resolution, or want of resolution rather; for we cannot possibly understand on what principle he neglected the only opportunity offered during the campaign of attacking the Allied forces in detail. The retreat from the Geyersberg, from half the Allied Army, offers rather an unfortunate illustration of the skill and genius which was to reduce the art of commanding armies to the rank of a positive science! St Cyr, in his account of this campaign, speaks of Napoleon as we have always had occasion to speak of him when describing his manner on impartial authority, as very undecided, and as far from tranquil or composed at important moments.

The faulty position of the French army, with its principal depôt at Dresden, a place of no peculiar strength, and constantly exposed to the attacks of the foe, having at last become evident even to Napoleon, preparations were made for a removal to Torgau, a regular fortress, farther down the Elbe, and consequently at a safer distance from the enemy. But the time when precautionary measures of this nature might have proved beneficial had long passed away, and the situation of

the army rendered it perfectly clear that a pertinacious stay on the Elbe would only render ultimate defeat more certain. Still Napoleon lingered: and some of the allied corps having again advanced along the Peterswald road to make a demonstration for the protection of one of the many projected movements never carried into effect, he not only pressed them back across the mountains, but followed them on the 17th of September into the very valley of Culm. A short action here took place, which ending to the disadvantage of the French, the Emperor returned to Dresden.

On the 20th, however, he was again on the march towards Bautzen, Blücher having forced back Marshal M'Donald and occupied that post. At Harta he came in sight of the enemy, who offered battle, but Napoleon declined to attack. Skirmishes ensued along the whole front of the line; nothing decisive, however, took place; and on the 24th he was already on his return to the Saxon capital! The troops were completely exhausted by these incessant and unproductive marches, and gloom and melancholy overcast the Imperial head-quarters. The coil was now closing fast round the French army: fatigue, famine, and the sword, were rapidly thinning its ranks; forced marches, constant exposure, and the want of food, were filling the wretched and ill-supplied hospitals, and strewing every road and camp with exhausted and perishing soldiers; while the endless succession of combats and skirmishes fought daily and hourly round the ever-narrowing circle within which they were now confined, kept the hand of death incessantly occupied in gathering a harvest such as none but Napoleon had ever offered to its unerring scythe.

Famine, as usual, loosened the bonds of discipline. Requisitions, plunder, and extortion, were the order of

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the day ; and what escaped the brute force of the soldiers fell a prey to the more iniquitous arts of the commissaries. The country was exhausted ; the villages situated on the lines of march, or in the districts occupied by the troops, were entirely ruined. All the houses not built of stone had been torn to pieces to serve as fuel for the bivouacs. The huts of the peasantry had been stripped of their miserable furniture, for the benefit of the cold and cheerless camps. Not a morsel of forage could be obtained for the horses ; for the tenth time, the earth was turned over in search of the few potatoes that might have escaped the eyes of former plunderers. And when the troops were withdrawn from the right bank of the Elbe, they were commanded not only to carry away the cattle and provisions that could be found, but even to lay waste the friendly country which had made such vast sacrifices and suffered so much in their cause :* an order more cruel than the one which commanded the destruction of the Kremlin, of the palaces of Counts Razumowsky and Rostopchin, but resulting from the same ignoble feeling, and fully worthy indeed of Attila himself. To bring supplies from a distance—a practice little known in the French army —was almost impossible at a time when allied bands hovered on all their lines of communication. And so badly had Napoleon's measures been calculated, that on the 12th September, less than a month after the renewal of hostilities, we actually find the two corps of the army under the King of Naples put in motion to protect a single convoy of provisions !

The boldness of the allied bands, acting in rear of the French, became every day more ruinous to the

* Odleben. St Cyr. Saxony and its Warriors in 1812 and 1813.

latter; and the exploits performed by some of these corps remind us forcibly of the wild and romantic adventures achieved during the Thirty Years' War by the daring followers of Torstensohn and Wallenstein. Many of these actions are in the highest degree deserving of notice; and we regret that our limits necessarily prevent us from describing them at sufficient length to render full justice to the skill and gallantry of which they furnish such brilliant proofs.

The most important of these adventurous actions were General Walmoden's victory at the Goerde, and Count Czernicheff's expedition against Cassel. General Walmoden, informed by an intercepted despatch that General Pecheux was to march from Hamburg to Magdeburg with a division of 7000 men and eight pieces of artillery, prepared to fall upon him with a superior body of troops. Having, with great speed and secrecy, thrown a bridge of boats across the Elbe at Dömitz, and concealed his march from Davoust, he assailed the French division near the Goerde, completely dispersed them, captured the whole of their artillery, and returned to his former position in front of the French marshal, before the latter had heard of his skilful movement. In this action the 3d Hussars of the King's German Legion charged and broke two squares of French infantry regularly formed and steadily waiting the onset: an additional illustration to those already furnished of the value of modern tactics, and the total inability of musket-and-bayonet-armed infantry to resist bold, resolute, and well-disciplined horsemen, charging bravely home on fair and level ground.

One of the results of this brilliant action was the capture of Cassel. At the head of 1500 Cossacks and a squadron of Prussian volunteer cavalry, Count Czerni-

cheff advanced to the gates of the Westphalian capital, which King Jerome abandoned at the first sight of the enemy. To force an entrance into the city with light cavalry only was soon discovered to be impracticable; and General Bartineller arriving with some thousand troops to the rescue, it was found necessary to give him battle. The combat was not, however, sanguinary: the Westphalians, having no wish to shed their blood for the intrusive King, dispersed or joined the Allies as soon as they came in sight. Czernicheff, reinforced by this infantry, returned to the attack of Cassel, which he carried after a slight resistance: thus terminating the kingdom of Westphalia by a mere skirmish!

It is enough for our purpose to add, that from the 11th September to the 3d October these daring bands, acting in the rear of the French army, made no less than 10,300 prisoners, including three general officers. Forty-seven pieces of artillery, with various convoys of ammunition, stores and provisions, also fell into their hands: all regular communication with France was at an end; and so destructive were the operations of these detached corps, that the best light cavalry of the army, including the light cavalry of the Guard, had to be sent against them. These forces, commanded by General Lefevre Desnouettes, fought several bravely contested actions against the partisan swarms; but more frequently vanquished than victorious, they increased the slaughter indeed, but were totally unable to effect the object they had in view.

The time had now arrived when success and constantly augmenting superiority were to embolden the Allies and make them depart from their cautious system of war. General Benningsen, who with the Russian reserve had been advancing at a snail's pace—Jomini says, "giant

strides"—was approaching the scene of action with 57,000 men and 200 pieces of artillery,—one formidable army arriving to the aid of another: and thus reinforced, even Schwarzenberg thought he could venture to assume the offensive. It was intended that this Russian reserve should take the place of the Silesian army, and relieve Blücher, who was ordered to join the Grand Army in Bohemia. But against this arrangement the victor of the Katzbach urged with great justness, that his own position masked and covered the march of Benningsen's troops, who could join the Grand Army without the slightest chance of molestation ; whereas the Silesian army, placed in front of the enemy, could not make a single march to the left, without at least exposing the movement to their observation. As the simplest process, he therefore recommended that the Russians should march into Bohemia. To show the melancholy want of confidence then existing between the Allied commanders, it may be right to state, that the letter conveying this advice to the Allied Sovereigns was entrusted to a confidential staff-officer, who was farther desired to call the attention of the monarchs to the slow and tardy movements of the Crown Prince of Sweden, and to represent the advantage which might result to the cause from the presence of the Silesian army near the Army of the North, as, in the approaching operations, the former could hardly fail to impart some degree of activity to the latter. The sovereigns yielded to these representations, and no sooner was Benningsen ready to aid, than the forward movement commenced round both flanks of the French position.

According to the plan now adopted, the three armies were to unite in the plains of Saxony, between the Mulda and the Saale ; and the city of Leipzig, situated

in the centre of that district of country, was fixed upon as the point on which they were all to direct their movements.

Blücher was the first in motion. Leaving Bautzen on the 26th of September, and concealing his march with rare ability, he reached the Elbe opposite Wartenburg, and immediately commenced throwing bridges over the stream. Marshal Ney, ignorant of the progress of the Silesian army, but fearing that the Crown Prince would endeavour to force a passage on this point, had detached Bertrand with 25,000 men to oppose the attempt. The French commander reached his destination before the passage was effected, but the construction of the bridges was carried on with so much rapidity, that he had only time to occupy the strong and narrow isthmus which joins the Peninsula of Wartenburg to the main land; —the high embankment, thrown up to prevent the floods from breaking in upon the country, serving as excellent entrenchments against all enemies striving to advance from the bridges. A post of this strength, occupied in such force, would probably have arrested every other adversary; but Blücher, aware how much depended on the result, no sooner saw the bridges completed, than he ordered the troops to the attack. The combat was long and sanguinary: the French were driven from their strong position with the loss of 1000 men killed and wounded. The Prussians had double the number of men struck down; but they took 1000 prisoners, 13 pieces of artillery, and 80 ammunition-waggons.

The passage of the Elbe at Wartenburg is one of the most brilliant actions of the war, and greatly exceeds in merit the boasted passage of the bridge of Lodi, achieved with an army covered by the fire of artillery from the ramparts of a town, in opposition to only

6000 Austrians posted with sixteen guns on perfectly open ground. But few, except military students or accidental recorders of these events, have heard of the combat of Wartenburg; whereas the battle of Lodi still swells the loudest notes of fame.

The gallant exploit of the Silesian army drew even the Crown Prince from his inactivity. On the 4th of October, his Royal Highness crossed the river without experiencing any opposition; and on the following day both hosts, amounting to 120,000 effective men, were fairly assembled on the left bank of the great central stream of Germany. But the very different character of the commanders rendered their co-operations difficult, and greatly reduced the efficiency of such gallant and formidable numbers. The correspondence and interviews between Bernadotte and Blücher, the difficulties and vexations occasioned by the selfish vanity of the Crown Prince, and which were only overcome by the admirable tact, conduct, and judgment of the keen-sighted Hussar, belong not to our subject. This passage of history is nevertheless highly instructive; as it shows how indispensable temper is to all who are placed in high and responsible situations: it shows us the most fiery of men submitting, when the great cause of his country was at stake, to the trifling puerilities of pretending mediocrity, with a degree of calmness and forbearance that philosophers often recommend, but that few ever practised perhaps in an equal degree.

While the Armies of the North and of Silesia were thus passing the Elbe and circling round the left of the French, the Bohemian army was crossing the Erzgebirge, and entering Saxony by the roads of Chemnitz and Zwickau. The King of Naples, who with 50,000 men watched the outlets of the Bohemian mountains,

fought some severe actions with the advancing Austrians, but was totally unable to arrest the armed torrent rolling down upon the plains of Saxony.

And where was Napoleon now? how was he, so often termed the thunderbolt of war, engaged, whilst hostile armies of mighty strength were thus pressing from all sides upon his suffering and diminished host? Was he concentrating his forces to spring upon the foremost foe who, emboldened by momentary success, should venture within his reach? We can, in truth, find no appearance of such magnificent preparations; and only discover the Emperor dictating plans, recorded in Norvin's Portefeuille of 1813, and which were never even attempted to be executed. The most singular inactivity had succeeded to the most constant, harassing, and unprofitable activity.

Our last recapitulation left the Emperor at Dresden on the 7th September, after he had abandoned the pursuit of Blücher's army and the projected march on Berlin. From the 8th to the 13th, we have seen him employed with his Guards and reserves, in driving the advanced parties of the Allies back into the plain of Töplitz; and in reconnoitring their half assembled army from the summit of the Geyersberg, whence, without striking a blow, he returns to Dresden to observe if any thing can be effected on the north-eastern part of his line of operations: his eyes are still directed towards Berlin.

Hardly arrived in the capital, he is informed that the Allies are again pressing back St Cyr's troops; with his Guards and reserves he, therefore, returns for the third and last time to the Erzgebirge, and follows the retiring enemy into the very plain of Culm: finding Schwarzenberg's forces assembled and willing to give battle, he returns again to Dresden. But his stay there is not

long. On the 20th he is already on his march against Blücher, whose advanced guard is driven back from Bischofswerda ; but the Prussian commander having drawn up his army and offered battle at Bautzen, Napoleon declines the challenge, and again returns to Dresden : having thus, in less than three weeks, undertaken three additional expeditions, attended with no other result than to harass his troops and waste their rapidly declining strength.

" I will not go out again," he said, on returning to his quarters after this last expedition to Bautzen : and during the fourteen days that preceded his final departure from the banks of the Elbe, we find him perfectly stationary and inert,—his armies also remaining completely on the defensive. He thus continued inactive with divided forces, while hostile masses were moving, within arm's length, round the circumference of the circle in which he stood. He saw mighty hosts preparing to form a junction in the plains of the Saale, in the very rear of his position, and where, had they acted boldly, he would have been completely cut off ; and yet, seeing this, he remained a tame, motionless spectator of their movements ! It was, to say the least, a strange system of strategy, and was soon destined to meet the reward it seemed so well calculated to deserve.

" Every hour of this protracted stay at Dresden," says Baron Fain, " now augmented the gloom at head-quarters, and the uneasiness of those who surrounded the Emperor. An evil-boding spirit of despondency was observed ; symptoms of discouragement and discontent were perceptible ; and it seemed as if an invisible file were severing the links which had so long united the Emperor and the army, and rendered them mutually invincible. ' What is Napoleon doing in this extremity,

—what is he waiting for?' said over-impatient soldiers: 'Is he sleeping?' continued the evil-boding critics."

These unpromising appearances need hardly surprise us, however reprehensible Baron Fain may have thought them. The Moscow campaign, the defeats of Gross-Beeren, Katzbach, Culm, and Dennewitz, had naturally impaired the *morale* of the army, and destroyed the blind confidence formerly reposed in the fortunes of the Emperor. A hundred and twenty thousand men had been lost since the renewal of hostilities, in the brief space of seven weeks: it was clear to all, that a great and decisive catastrophe was at hand; and few would believe that the inactive repose of the lion in his den, when the hunters were gathering fast around, was the best mode of averting the frowning danger.

This became at last sufficiently apparent to Napoleon himself; and on the 6th October he sent for St Cyr, who was stationed at Pirna, and gave him his necessary instructions. He told the Marshal that "he intended to move against the Crown Prince and Blücher, and hoped to defeat one of them before the Bohemian army could reach Leipzig. He then proposed to assemble his forces in that city, and fight a general action which should give a better turn to his affairs. In the meantime, the Marshal was to defend Dresden to the last, as he intended, after his anticipated victory, to make it the pivot of his future operations."

In the evening St Cyr had the honour of dining with the Emperor, who was in the highest spirits. "He spoke with enthusiasm of General Rey's brilliant defence of St Sebastian; and explained, in the most luminous manner, the causes which had occasioned Soult's failure on the Bidassoa. The Generals present experienced the deepest regret, that a man who could judge of others

with so much clearness and ability, should be unable to apply his sagacity to the conduct of his own affairs."

At midnight the Emperor again sent for St Cyr. "He had received news from Marshal Ney," he said, "and had completely changed his plan." "I am going to abandon Dresden," he continued, "and intend to take Vandamme's corps and yours along with me. I am about to fight a decisive battle: if I gain it, I shall regret not having had all my forces with me: if, on the other hand, I sustain a reverse, you will have been of no use to me in the battle; and shut up here, you will be lost without resource. Besides, what is Dresden now? It can no longer be considered as the pivot of the army, which is unable to find subsistence in the exhausted country that surrounds us. As little can it be considered a great depôt; for it only contains a few days' provisions: nearly all the stores of ammunition are exhausted, and the little that remains may be given to the soldiers. There are at Dresden 12,000 sick or wounded; but they will nearly all die, being the remains of 60,000 who have entered the hospitals since the opening of the campaign. When winter sets in, the Elbe no longer affords a position: when frozen, it can be passed at all points. I am about to take up a better position. I shall throw back my right as far as Erfurt, support the left by Magdeburg, and my centre by the heights on the banks of the Saale, which form a bulwark at all times capable of arresting an enemy. Magdeburg will become to me another Dresden; it is a noble fortress, which can be left to its own resources without the risk of being carried, as Dresden might have been during the three days the Allies were before it, had they been commanded by a man of capacity. Dresden can never be made a strong

place without destroying the suburbs: in addition to this, it would require to be refurnished with provisions and ammunition; and it is now impossible to introduce them. In fine, I wish to change my position. Dresden is too near Bohemia; no sooner have I left it, even for the shortest expedition, than the enemy is before its walls. By the more distant position I propose to take, I shall be in a situation to direct great blows against the Allies, and force them to a durable peace."

No one can possibly doubt the accuracy of the views here expressed, regarding the faulty position of Dresden; our only difficulty is, to understand how Napoleon happened to be still blind to them on the morning of the same day when he directed St Cyr to defend such a post to the last: above all, it is difficult to understand how that blindness could again come over him next morning, when he countermanded the directions here given; and left St Cyr at Dresden, where he could be of no service, and where, as the Emperor had himself prophesied, he was cut off and taken in consequence of the events we have presently to relate.

Before proceeding, let us here ask a question, the solution of which may be interesting to history, when estimating the relative merit of those who have acted important parts on the great scene of the world. It is this: Was Napoleon's situation at Dresden as difficult or dangerous as the situation of Frederick II. when he set out from the same station to open the winter campaign of 1757? The King of Prussia, assailed by France, Sweden, Austria, and Russia, was attacked on the Elbe, the Oder, the Pregel, and on the frontiers of Poland; his forces had been defeated in three general actions; half of his dominions were in the hands of the

enemy; and he was left with an army of a hundred thousand men to contend against four times the number of adversaries.

Napoleon stood evidently on far better ground. Though inferior to the Allies in the number of his troops, that inferiority was by no means so great, and his resources were comparatively unbroken, and yet how different the results! Frederick, by throwing genius into the scale, triumphed over all his enemies. With only 22,000 men he achieved, on the 5th of November, the decisive victory of Rossbach against Soubise's army, 50,000 strong; and following up this brilliant success, already on the 12th December defeated 90,000 Austrians at Leuthen, when he had only a third of that number under his command. And what a change thus effected in thirty-seven days!

Napoleon left Dresden on the morning of the 7th October; and it may be truly said that the march began in melancholy state: for tears marked the procession. The King of Saxony, with his family, accompanied the Emperor; and the citizens, seeing their aged monarch following, hostage-like, in the train of the French army, forsaking his beautiful capital in anticipation of the evils which might be impending over it, wept to behold the grief and sorrow which a justly beloved sovereign felt so deeply in their cause.

On the 9th, the Emperor was at Eilenburg, where he had 125,000 men, of whom 20,000 were cavalry, under his immediate command. Marshal Augereau had brought the army of reserve, amounting to 15,000 men, from the banks of the Maine; General Areghi had arrived with 16,000 more from the banks of the Saale. These troops had assembled in the neighbourhood of Leipzig, and having been placed under the

orders of the King of Naples, carried to 80,000 men the forces with which he was confronting the Grand Army of Schwarzenberg. Independently of the 35,000 effective men left with St Cyr at Dresden, Napoleon had thus 200,000 men in the plains of Saxony to encounter;—on one side, the northern and Silesian armies, forming together 120,000 men, and the army of Schwarzenberg, consisting of 200,000 men, on the other. The superiority of numbers was thus fearfully against him; but in such vast multitudes, a superiority of numbers is far from being proportionally of equal importance as in smaller armies: for the larger the masses, the greater is the difficulty of bringing them into simultaneous conflict with the enemy; the smaller bodies, if the troops are of equal quality, being necessarily by far the most manageable. Napoleon had also a central position and absolute command in his favour; and it is doubtful whether, at the moment of which we are speaking,—when the Prince Royal of Sweden was exasperating old Blücher by the absurd "pranks he played before high Heaven," and when Schwarzenberg was timidly feeling his way on to Leipzig, almost courting some cause for retreat,—whether at such a moment we say, the best chances of success were not in favour of the French. Still it was only by substituting ability for numbers, that the balance could be turned to their side; but in Napoleon's movements we discover not a vestige of ability, highly as they have been lauded. On the contrary, we are bound to say, that in the mass, his adversaries displayed by far the greater amount of skill: the direct and daring genius of Blücher encouraged Schwarzenberg, and forced even the Crown Prince to depart from his tortuous policy.

After having so long blamed his marshals for their

want of success against the Allied commanders, and blamed them for not making skill supply the place of numbers, the time was now come when the Emperor himself was to display his talents in the performance of such a task: his armies were assembled, brave, ready, and devoted as ever; the foe had fairly entered the arena; a thousand hostile banners waved around the French army; and did not that vast circle present a single weak point that could be struck at with success?

On the evening of the 9th, Ney's troops were already on the march towards Düben, and Napoleon was to follow next morning with the rest of the army, for the purpose of attacking Blücher; but the Prussian had at last arranged his plans with Bernadotte, and both had fallen back behind the Saale, where they proposed to receive battle if attacked; and at all events, place themselves in communication with Schwarzenberg. Napoleon took post at Düben, where from the very first fortune seemed unwilling to smile upon him. Owing to the error of a staff officer, General Sacken's division did not take the proper direction when Blücher's troops were ordered to retire, but arrived at Düben when that town was already in possession of the French. They were thus completely cut off, and might have been captured or dispersed, had not the presence of mind of their commander and the singular inattention of the enemy enabled them to escape. The Russians, without attempting to fall back, which would have been certain ruin, or appearing in the slightest degree discomposed, made a half wheel to the right, and marched unchallenged round the French, who were preparing their bivouacs; and once round the hostile flank, a night march brought them up with the main body of the army.

Napoleon remained at Düben from the 10th to the 14th; and it must be confessed that these four days of perfect inactivity constitute a most important period of his extraordinary career. The indecision displayed at such a moment offers so striking a contrast to the resolution, promptness, quickness of observation and of action claimed for him by his admirers, that we are bound to enter into some examination of his conduct, as well as of the deceptions practised for the purpose of upholding his military infallibility.

As we have seen, he arrived at Düben with the intention of attacking Blücher and the Crown Prince of Sweden; but instead of following up the blow when he found they had retired, he wheeled to the right, turned his back upon the enemy, and, extending his army fan-like, the columns pointing to Wartenberg, Wittenberg, and Dessau, marched eastward towards the Elbe, while the Armies of the North and of Silesia, having turned their backs upon him, were marching to the west. By this *dos-à-dos* movement, Napoleon was dividing and spreading out his forces, at the same time that the Allies were closing in upon their general point of union. Let us now see how he attempts to justify such extraordinary measures.

"It was," as he tells us in the St Helena Memoirs, "the Emperor's intention to allow the Allies to advance into the territory between the Elbe and the Saale, and then, manœuvring under protection of the fortresses and magazines of Dresden, Torgau, Wittenberg, and Magdeburg, to have carried the war into the country between the Elbe and the Oder, on which latter river France still held Glogau, Stettin, and Custrin; and according to circumstances, to have raised the blockade of Dantzig, Zamosc, and Modelin on the Vistula. The vast success

to be anticipated from such a plan, promised to disorganize the coalition."

And why then was so promising a plan abandoned? Those who had contrived so many devices to uphold the character for high genius ascribed to their idol, were not likely to be at fault on this point, particularly so when they saw how readily the world received any intelligence, however extravagant, intended to enhance the fame of the man of destiny. Two causes have, therefore, been assigned for the change of measures adopted by Napoleon, and for the abandonment of a project which was "to dissolve the coalition." At the very moment, it is said, when he was about to strike the decisive blow, news arrived that the King of Bavaria had forsaken the French alliance and joined the Allies; a step which was too likely to be followed by the other Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, and which, therefore, rendered it indispensably necessary for the army to march on Leipzig. Other writers, not feeling sure that this statement would altogether pass examination, have added, that the army no sooner became aware of the Emperor's intention of leading them towards Berlin, than discontent, amounting almost to an open mutiny, manifested itself: to such an extent was opposition carried that the marshals and generals went in a body to remonstrate with the sovereign against the execution of the orders he had given.

We have no hesitation in declaring both these statements, though received as authentic, and repeated by able and respectable historians, to be totally destitute of foundation.

And first as to the pretended news of the Bavarian defection.

The treaty of Reid, by which Bavaria consented to withdraw from French alliance, was only signed on the 8th October, and the King's declaration of war issued on the 14th of the same month. Now, even in ordinary times, and in ordinary course of post, the news of the first event, the signature of the treaty, could not, if it had transpired, immediately have come from Reid, round by Munich and Stuttgard,—the pretended information having been sent by the "faithful King of Wurtemberg,"—to Düben in the space of four days: still less could it have come at the period of which we are speaking, when the direct roads were covered with the Allied light troops, and at a moment when the Austrians were actually in possession of the banks of the Saale. Napoleon is said to have received the tidings on the 13th; but we know from his own orders, that on the 12th he had already abandoned the intention of carrying the war to the right bank of the Elbe. We have clear proof, indeed, that he was not informed of the Bavarian defection even on the 14th, for we find him on that day issuing the following order for posting the four Bavarian battalions that were serving in General Durieu's division:—"Write to General Durieu," he says, in an order, dated 14th, and addressed to the Major-General, "and desire him to entrust Eilenburg to the Bavarian Guard. Let him—Durieu—examine the place along with their commanding officer, and see that the infantry and artillery are properly posted," &c. Now, let us ask, would Napoleon, if on the 13th he had received news of the change of policy which had taken place in Bavaria, have entrusted these troops, which had thus become his enemies, with an important and insulated post whence they could most conveniently go over to the enemy? Would he not, on the contrary, have disarmed them and

removed them from the army? We may farther add, that the distinguished author of the History of the Wars in Europe states himself to have ascertained that no communication to the effect pretended was made by the King of Wurtemberg: and it is besides well known that General Meerfeld, taken prisoner on the 16th, was the first who informed Napoleon of the Bavarian defection. The orders for passing the Elbe are dated 11th, but on the 12th, Napoleon already writes to the Duke of Bassano:—

"DÜBEN, 12*th Oct.*, 4 *o'clock p.m.*

"MONSIEUR LE DUC DE BASSANO.—Cause the officer who bears this letter to be immediately furnished with a horse; never mind which, so that he may reach Leipzig before seven o'clock. The matter in question is as follows:—The King of Naples is in position at Gröbern. He estimates at 60,000 men the enemy in his immediate front. If, with his single force, he can maintain himself all day, to-morrow, the 13th, I shall then march on Leipzig with my whole army, and give the enemy battle," &c. &c.

Here then the intention of carrying the war to the right bank of the Elbe is completely abandoned. At midnight the answer is received from Murat, who says that Augereau has joined him; that he has 90,000 men, and can hold Leipzig against Schwarzenberg. And now we expect, of course, to see the whole army ordered towards that city, as promised in the letter of the previous evening; but no such thing: news had been received that Ney had forced Tauenzien, who was at Dessau, to fall back on the road towards Berlin, and that M'Donald and Reynier had obliged General Tumen

to raise the blockade of Wittenberg, and retire in the same direction. Napoleon now consigns Leipzig and Murat to the care of fortune; and at one o'clock in the morning sends orders for all the corps to press the enemy, and follow up the success gained on the right bank of the Elbe! But in three hours' time another change comes over the spirit of the dream; and at four o'clock orders are issued for the whole army to march upon Leipzig! The murmurs of the troops, "amounting almost to revolt," and which we are told made the Emperor abandon his splendid project of marching on Berlin, must therefore have been heard, and produced their effect between the hours of one and four in the morning of the 13th; the pretended visit of the marshals and the staff of the army, who came to remonstrate with the Emperor against the execution of the plan he had formed, must have taken place during the same hours of the night!

The "murmurs" of the troops and the remonstrance of the staff, would, if true, imply a degree of insubordination totally incompatible with the existence of a disciplined army; and in point of fact, the French army retained their discipline, and remained to the last, and under the most trying circumstances, honourably obedient to the orders of their sovereign. There were, in all ranks, many different opinions respecting Napoleon, his measures, character, talents, and the justice of his wars; but there was no difference of conduct: and men and officers performed, in brave and soldier-like style, all the duties which the then existing laws of France imposed upon them; and every attempt to uphold the fame of the leader, at the expense of the army, will be pretty sure to fail. The Emperor was little in the habit of consulting his officers, and never submitted his plans to

them, as it is asserted he did on this occasion; and General Pelet, writing with the feelings of a soldier naturally anxious for the honour of the profession to which he belongs, says not one word about the "murmurs of the army," and denies all the pretended consultations with the General and Marshals; the most distinguished officers being absent with their corps, and not even present at head-quarters. General Rogniat, another officer of talents, tells us, that, "contrary to his custom, Napoleon consulted some officers at Düben, and that he (Rogniat) was one of the number;" but he says not one word of the murmurs of the army, nor of the remonstrances of the Generals and staff officers.

Baron Odleben is another and a most impartial witness, who gives evidence to the same effect. "The four days," he says, "that Napoleon remained in the small *chateau* of Düben, were certainly the most tedious of the whole campaign. I have seen him at this time seated on a sofa beside a table, on which lay his maps, totally unemployed, unless in mechanically tracing large letters on a sheet of white paper. The geographer D'Albe, and the Secretary of the Cabinet, were in a corner of the room, and seemed to wait for orders." There is not a word of the murmurs in the army, nor of the pretended remonstrance of the officers, which a person, attached as Odleben was to head-quarters, must have known, had the one existed or the other taken place.

The idle assertions put forward on these points, which historians should have disregarded instead of receiving as evidence, originate in the exaggerations and special pleadings of Baron Fain, a writer anxious to uphold the fame of Napoleon at any price,—and in the account of what passed at Düben, given in the so-called Memoirs of Coulaincourt, a book totally worth-

less in an historical point of view, not even pretended to have been written by the Duke of Vicenza himself, but compiled from conversations held with him by a lady who accidentally met him at a watering-place shortly before his death: the work cannot be received as authority on any point, and is entirely undeserving of notice.

Whether Napoleon was actually serious in his intentions of carrying the war to the right bank of the Elbe, it is impossible to say; but we rather think he was not, and suspect that the movement across the river was, after all, only a demonstration intended to call Blücher and Bernadotte back to the right bank of the stream, and thus separate them from Schwarzenberg: an object almost attained, for the Crown Prince was very nearly falling into the snare. The grand plan itself, with all its accompanying decorations of murmurs, remonstrances, threatened revolts, and unexpected news of the Bavarian defection, we hold to be only a rhodomontade, devised, like so many others, to conceal the want of decision at an important moment, and intended to uphold the idea of Napoleon's military infallibility, by making the world believe that treason and mutiny had alone occasioned his failure.

If it is still maintained, that the plan of advancing to Berlin was actually in contemplation; if Napoleon, who since the renewal of hostilities had been losing more than two thousand men a day, really intended to throw himself with 150,000 men into hostile and exhausted Prussia, where nothing was to be gained, leaving nearly double that number of enemies in his rear; if he seriously proposed to abandon all communication with France, forsake the resources of his mighty empire, and depend on the supplies of a few fortresses on the Elbe and the Oder, the blockading corps of which

would necessarily bring far greater reinforcements to the Allies than the garrisons could to the French; if he actually proposed to carry into effect a movement that would instantly have made all the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine follow the example Bavaria had just given; then he certainly has the merit of having entertained the most ruinous and extravagant project ever formed in modern times.

It is remarkable that the only tactical regulation or novelty ever introduced into the French army during the warlike reign of Napoleon, should be dated from Düben. The science of tactics—using the word in its proper sense—had either attained to the highest perfection before his time, or he wanted the ability to improve it even by a single step. On the 13th of the month, the Major-General is desired to circulate the following order: —"Issue a general order, directing that, from this date, the infantry are to form only two deep; his Majesty having observed that no effect is produced either by the fire or by the bayonets of the third rank," &c., &c. It was rather late, perhaps, to make this important tactical discovery; and it would be interesting to know when his Majesty ever saw any effect produced by the bayonets either of the first or second rank: for the world has yet to learn that these boasted military weapons were ever used in fair and manly combat. The overwhelming disaster which befell the French army in the plains of Leipzig, and of which we have now to speak, will help to show how far Napoleon's strategical skill exceeded his tactical knowledge.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GATHERING ROUND LEIPZIG: COMBATS OF WACHAU AND MÖKERN: THE GENERAL ACTION: ASSAULT AND CAPTURE OF THE CITY.

We now approach the battle of Leipzig, the real catastrophe of the great Napoleon drama, and the most memorable action of war recorded in the annals of time. It is memorable from the number and composition of the armies engaged, and from the mighty stakes resting on the issue of the contest. Half a million of disciplined soldiers, the most numerous hosts ever assembled in one field of strife, were now to decide the fate of civilized nations: arms were to determine whether the States of Europe should be tributary to France, enslaved by military despotism, or governed by native princes, and ruled by national institutions. Power, sway, and boundless dominion, were contended for on one side; national honour, freedom, and independence, on the other: and often as these brilliant advantages have been the objects of war, it must be confessed that they were never contended for with more resolution, bravery, and perseverance, than in the gigantic struggle we must now attempt to describe.

We have seen that Napoleon, when at Düben, sent some corps across the Elbe; these troops, whatever the

real object of their mission may have been, raised the blockade of Wittenberg, pressed Tauenzien's division back from Dessau, and destroyed the bridges of Wartenburg and Acken; services that proved essentially injurious to the French cause. The Crown Prince of Sweden no sooner heard of the movement on the right bank of the Elbe, than he immediately took the alarm and commenced his march towards the river, calling on Blücher to follow him across the stream. His Royal Highness also stated, that he was authorized by the Emperor Alexander to assume the command of the Silesian army in case of emergency; and as he now deemed such a case to have arrived, he requested the Prussian Marshal to support him accordingly. Blücher was not the man to be imposed upon by a few skirmishes round Wittenberg; and having never heard of the arrangement which in any case placed him under the orders of the Prince, merely sent an urgent request entreating his Royal Highness to delay his march; and without taking the slightest notice of his claim to command, endeavoured to convince him, that Napoleon's movement across the Elbe was only a demonstration intended to deceive the Allied Armies, and take off their attention from the real point of action. The alarm at the Swedish head-quarters was, however, so extravagant, that this remonstrance would have proved totally unavailing had not the French parties already destroyed the bridges of Acken, and obliged the Prince to countermarch his troops. The French officer who performed this action rendered a very indifferent service to Napoleon: for had Bernadotte crossed the river, he could not have been present at the battle of Leipzig; above all, had Blücher been of a yielding and credulous disposition, had he placed implicit reliance on the word of the

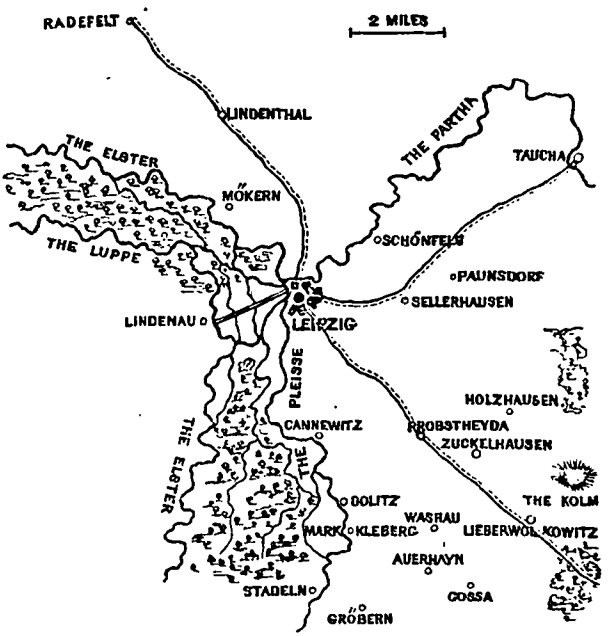
Swedish Prince, and followed him in his march, it is not easy to say what the world's aspect might have been at this day. Every page of general history proves how often the destiny of empires is made to depend upon the events of war; and every page of military history shows us instances of the most important results produced by the most trifling causes; and thus points out to all governments the clear duty of selecting only the ablest individuals that can be obtained for the performance of responsible military duties. But so little is this evident duty understood or acknowledged, that in England military rank, actual command over Englishmen, is still sold for money.

Napoleon had lingered four days inactively at Düben, unable to form a resolution, when every hour was worth ten thousand men; he had lingered till the thickly-gathering storm left at last no farther time for hesitation, and till he had placed his ill-fated host in the position which he afterwards so well described, when he said, that "a thunderbolt alone could save him; but that all was not lost while a battle was in his power, as a single victory might restore Germany to obedience." He now hurried to seek this battle; but did not prove himself the thunderbolt capable of upholding the vast fabric Fortune had raised in his favour.

On the 13th October, the whole army were ordered to march on Leipzig; and as a proof of the delicacy with which Napoleon treated the sovereigns who were his allies, we may here mention, that the King of Saxony was ordered to march—even as baggage would be ordered to march—with General Curial's division.*

* *Düben*, 14 *October*, *à trois heures du matin.*——Le General Drouot donnera l'ordre au General Curial et au General Lefebvre de partir egalement a la pointe du jour, pour se diriger d'Eilen-

The city of Leipzig, which was now to witness the "great battle of nations," is situated in a wide, undulating, and well cultivated plain, richly wooded, and closely studded with hamlets, villages, and country seats. Two rivers of inferior magnitude, the Pleisse and the Elster, descending from the Bohemian mountains, pass to the west of the city, and unite to the north almost immediately under its walls. Both streams break into a



number of branches, and divide the meadows through which they hold their lazy course into a succession of

burg a Taucha. Le Roi de Saxe marchera avec les Generaux Lefebvre et Curial, &c. &c.

small, marshy, and often closely-wooded islands. The most considerable of the branch streams is the Luppe, which separates from the Elster at Lindenau, opposite to and a little above Leipzig, but continues to flow in the same direction the parent stream had originally held, the same as the now united Pleisse and Elster follow under the name of the latter; that of the former disappearing entirely after the junction of the streams. The island meadows formed above the town by the Pleisse and the Elster, are now formed by the Luppe and Elster, but without in the least changing their character and appearance. In winter, these islands are almost entirely overflowed; in summer, they are perfectly dry; but at the season of which we are speaking, many places were already impassable for bodies of troops. The rivers, though very narrow, are generally deep and muddy, and present few practicable fords.

The stripe of meadow-land here described is many miles in length, and generally from one to two in breadth, and forms thus an admirable barrier against any force advancing towards Leipzig from the westward; but presents, at the same time, a difficult obstacle to the retreat of an army falling back in that direction,—that is, towards France,—and pressed by a pursuing enemy. The meadows can only be passed on made roads; and at the time of the battle there existed but one, reaching entirely across them. This road, from Leipzig to Lindenau, though only two miles in length, passes over no less than five principal and sixteen of what are termed minor bridges,—thus giving ample proof of the difficult nature of the barrier.

Immediately to the north of the city, a very short distance above the junction of the Elster and the Pleisse, the last named stream receives the Partha, a large

rivulet flowing from the eastward. This new tributary has numerous fords, and is crossed by many bridges, but constitutes nevertheless a barrier of some difficulty to advancing troops ; for its banks are high, covered on most points with wood even to the water's edge, and its winding course forms a number of deep pools, rendered doubly dangerous from the muddy nature of its slimy bed. Leipzig, placed in the very angle formed by the junction of these streams, derives, on two sides at least, some little strength from their protecting waters ; for at the time of the battle, they formed nearly all the defences of which it could boast. The old city was still indeed surrounded by the remains of ancient tower-flanked walls, but totally out of repair ; and the large suburbs were only protected by barricades and entrenchments hastily constructed when the events of war threatened to bring hostile armies to the gates of the time-honoured capital of German literature and commerce.

The arena for battle fixed upon at last, Napoleon left Düben at seven o'clock on the morning of the 14th, and reached Leipzig about noon. He took his station at a blazing watch-fire, near the village of Reudnitz, close to the city, where he remained the greater part of the day, listening with callous tranquillity to the thunder of artillery rolling over from the direction of Lieberwolkowitz, where a severe cavalry action, that terminated in the defeat of the French horsemen, was then engaged. But Napoleon moved not ; he could remain an inactive listener to the roar of artillery carrying death to the ranks of his soldiers ! At night he established his quarters in the village of Reudnitz, where he was joined early next morning by the King of Naples, with whom he afterwards rode out to examine the position the latter had taken up in front of the Bohemian army. When he

reached Lieberwolkowitz, he despatched a flag of truce to the advanced posts of the Allies, requesting, on the part of Marshal Berthier, a conference with Prince Schwarzenberg. The officer who carried this message was not, however, received: he was only told "that the Prince was absent, and that it was not a time to negotiate." A battle was now the only alternative, nor was Napoleon unprepared for the contest.

The Emperor on this day presented eagles to some newly-formed regiments; and as the ceremony has been called imposing, and was now performed for the last time, we shall briefly describe it after Baron Odleben.

The regiment intended to be honoured by this mark of distinction formed, when drawn up, three sides of a square facing inwards, each side being composed of a battalion in close column of companies. As soon as the Emperor, whose numerous and brilliant staff made up the fourth side, reached the ground, the Prince of Wagram uncovered the eagle to the roll of all the drums of the corps, and then placed himself, with the banner in hand, at the head of the assembled officers. Everything thus prepared, the Emperor advanced into the centre of the square: on this occasion he was dressed in his grey great-coat, and rode the cream-coloured horse, his usual charger during the campaign. Holding the reins in his right hand, and pointing to the eagle with his left, he delivered the following speech in a clear, distinct, but not very loud voice:—

"Soldiers of the 26th regiment of light infantry, I entrust you with the French eagle! It will be your rallying point; and you swear to abandon it but with life! You swear never to suffer an insult to France! You swear to prefer death to dishonour! You swear!" These last words, uttered with peculiar emphasis, gave

the signal for the officers to raise their swords, when, in one high and exulting strain, the whole regiment repeated the oath. Berthier then delivered the eagle to the commanding-officer, after which the usual shouts of *Vive l'Empereur* terminated the boasted ceremony.

In his account of this military *spectacle*, as well as in other parts of his work, Baron Odleben, who was a cavalry officer, remarks on the bad horsemanship of the French Emperor, and tells us, that he generally held the reins in his right hand, had an ungraceful seat, and allowed his left arm to swing carelessly by his side when trotting. Bad horsemanship was, however, a very general characteristic of the French officers of the period; in the mass, the French cavalry also were bad riders; and Bülow, who was a cavalry officer, tells us that he saw nearly half a squadron overthrown in attempting to clear a ditch not four feet wide. But if badly trained and organized, their bravery was conspicuous in every field; and in none more so than the one of which we have now to speak.

The 16th of October,
Combats of Wachau and Mökern.

It was the Emperor's intention, when he left Düben, to attack the Bohemian army on the 15th; but time and distance had been miscalculated: the long march which the troops recalled from the right bank of the Elbe had to perform, delayed their arrival, and it was necessary to postpone the onset. The four days lost at Düben were already missed.

The force which the French assembled round Leipzig

amounted to 180,000 men,* and 700 pieces of artillery. With three corps, 3d, 4th,† and 6th, about 53,000 men, Marshal Ney stood to the northward of the city, ready to confront Blücher and the Crown Prince of Swedon. In parallel line, to the south of the city, Napoleon collected the rest of the army, composed of the 2d, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th corps, the whole of the Guards and four corps of cavalry, amounting in all to about 125,000 men. The position these troops occupied extended along a slightly-elevated ridge, or succession of low hills, running from Mark-Kleberg on the Pleisse, where their right was posted, round by Wachau to Lieberwolkowitz, which formed nearly the extreme left. These villages are large, contain many stone buildings, and derive some strength also from the earthen walls by which most of the gardens and orchards are enclosed; and projecting bastion-like from the lines, constituted the principal strength of the position. In other respects, it had no imposing feature, and might be considered as fairly open to attack along the whole front. Still we must bear in mind, that every plantation, or patch of wood—and there were several in this position—and every break or inequality of ground that shelters the soldier against the hostile fire, or retards the movements of foes when under fire, must give cool and experienced defenders some advantage over adversaries advancing to the onset, fully exposed to shot from head to heel. On the other hand, the spirit and elasticity of feeling that brave men derive from the mere circumstance of going forward, tends in some measure, and according to the

* Usually estimated at 176,000 men; but this number does not include Margeron's division, 5700 strong.

† The 4th corps, under Bertrand, 10,000 strong, was afterwards detached to Lindenau.

character of the troops, to counterbalance this advantage.

The Allied Army gathering round Leipzig greatly outnumbered the French, and amounted to 292,000 men, with 1300 pieces of artillery :* a host such as the Christian world had never seen assembled in one battle-field. But on the 16th, this disproportion between the adverse parties did not yet exist; for the army of the Crown Prince of Sweden, the Russian Reserve under Benningsen, and Colloredo's Austrian corps, amounting in all to 100,000 men, had not arrived; so that, if allowance is made for the strength of the French position, and the advantage of knowing exactly the ground to be fought over, it might be said that the forces on both sides were very nearly equal. What induced the Allies to hurry on the attack before their masses were assembled, is not very clear; but at midnight, on the 15th, three rockets of a brilliant white light, ascending from the head-quarters of Schwarzenberg, announced to the Silesian army, that their comrades and countrymen were prepared for battle; the signal was promptly answered, and three others sent up from Skeudnitz told that Blücher also was at his post: and both hosts, thus certain of mutual support, prepared for the day which was to liberate so many nations, with all the enthusiasm such a cause was certain to awaken in the breasts of patriot soldiers.

But brave and numerous as were the Allied troops, the disposition made for the attack was certainly of a nature to expose them to the greatest possible chance of defeat; for it actually left the French superior in num-

* The last effective returns before the battle give 291,000 men, of whom 56,000 were cavalry, and 1384 pieces of artillery. On the 16th, however, 200,000, with 944 guns, only were present.

bers on the most important point. Schwarzenberg having about 132,000 men of the Bohemian army under his immediate command, had so distributed his forces that only 65,000 were disposable on the right bank of the Pleisse, where the main effort was to be made.

Far to the left, and divided from the rest of the army by the Pleisse and the Elster, General Giulay was marching on Lindenau with 20,000 Austrians. Another Austrian corps, composed of 30,000 men, including the Austrian reserves, under the Prince of Hesse-Homberg, were ordered to advance along the swampy meadows between the Elster and the Pleisse, with directions to force the passage of the latter stream at Cannewitz, in rear of the French right, and thus take their position in reverse, while attacked in front by the corps of Klenau and Wittgenstein, supported by the Russian and Prussian reserves under the Grand Duke Constantine. A corps of 18,000 men, intended to support either attack in case of need, was at first too distant to lend any aid whatever.

At an early hour in the morning the troops were in motion; and at nine o'clock the rattling of musketry already told how near to each other these mighty hosts had encamped. The Prussians, under Kleist, were the first in action. Following the banks of the Pleisse, they attacked and carried the village of Mark-Kleberg, but were unable to gain ground beyond it, and were soon forced to stand on the defensive against the assaults of the enemy, who recaptured the village, and were again driven out by the Prussians. Lieberwolkowitz was, in like manner, taken by the Russians at the first onset, and recaptured by the French; but from the first, Wachau and the woods around were defended with a resolute gallantry that defied all the efforts of the assailants.

While these combats were in progress round the villages, General Meerfeld, advancing with part of the Prince of Homberg's corps along the meadows formed between the Elster and the Pleisse, attempted to carry the bridges of Cannewitz, and force the passage of the latter stream; but Poniatowsky's division, stationed here to protect the flank of the French army, maintained the post right gallantly. The Polish guns swept the bridges; and the infantry, posted in the houses and behind the garden-walls of the village, foiled all the efforts of the Austrians, who, owing to the marshy and wooded nature of the ground, were unable to bring any force of artillery into action.

Still the combat raged fiercely round the villages. Mark-Kleberg, taken and retaken, remained in the hands of the Prussians; but Wachau was in possession of the French: and though Klenau's guns flanked Lieberwolkowitz, and caused dreadful havoc in the ranks of its defenders, all the efforts to storm the village ended only in loss and defeat. It was eleven o'clock, and the battle was already sinking down to a mere cannonade, when the French, passing suddenly from the defensive to the offensive, again led to severe but partial fighting on several points of the line.

As we have already stated, it was Napoleon's intention to fall upon the Allies on the morning of the 16th: for this purpose, the corps of Victor, Lauriston, Augerau, Poniatowsky, M'Donald, all the Guards, and three corps of cavalry, were ordered to concentrate in the position before described. Some of the troops not having arrived in time, it was necessary to postpone the onset; and when at nine o'clock he alighted from his carriage at Lieberwolkowitz, he already found himself attacked along his whole front. Delaying the advanced

movement, therefore, till events should more clearly develop themselves, he took post on a rising ground behind Wachau, to watch the progress of the battle.

Here it appears he remained during the greater part of the day, without ever attempting to profit by the advantages which the failure of the allied attacks, and the scattered position of their troops, avowedly offered him during the early period of the action: he saw his enemies falling back from the murderous fire of the French guns; saw that their numbers were far inferior to what might have been expected; but still kept his masses immoveably fixed behind Wachau. At eleven o'clock, the first partial onset was made; he then ordered M'Donald to commence the attack against the right wing of the Allies. The troops dashed forward with their usual gallantry, carried the portions of Lieberwolkowitz which the Austrians had occupied, and following their success, captured the Kolm, or Swedish redoubt,—a hill of some elevation, the level nature of the country considered. Mounting guns on this commanding position, their shot swept the plain around, and foiled the efforts of the Austrians to regain the post. But though they maintained the post, they were defeated in every attempt to advance beyond it, and to carry the villages of Possnau, Seifershayen, and the surrounding woods.

Partial as the success of the French was here, it exceeded what they experienced on the right.

The Austrian staff officers placed in observation on the steeple of Gossa, had reported that large masses of troops were assembling behind the French position at Wachau; and the Emperor Alexander, dreading an attack on the feeble and extended line of the Allies engaged on the right bank of the Pleisse, called on Prince

Schwarzenberg to cross the river with the Austrian reserves, at the same time that he ordered the Russian and Prussian Guards to close more to the front. These orders were in course of execution when the French renewed the attack on Mark-Kleberg. Their infantry was repulsed, but the cavalry of Solkoniki and Berkheim, charging the allied squadrons that supported the Prussians, overthrew and pursued them fiercely into the plain. Passing between the masses of infantry without any attempt to break them, they continued the pursuit of the vanquished horsemen, and approached Gröbern, far in rear of the first line of the Allies, at the very moment when the leading squadrons of the Austrian reserve cavalry were issuing from the village, under the orders of Count Nostiz. This gallant officer, perceiving that the ranks of the enemy were already loosened by the chase, instantly charged them with the cuirassiers first at hand, beat them back, and drove them in upon their reserves. Here the Austrians were arrested, and again repulsed; but supported in their turn, they renewed the attack. For a time the combat thickened and became very sharp: a regiment of Saxon cuirassiers arrived to the aid of the French, and lent them brave assistance: the fate of battle wavered as these war-tried soldiers mixed in close and gallant fight.

But where valour was equal, the superior skill and horsemanship of the riders and superior condition of the horses decided the victory; the best of the French cavalry were here defeated, driven headlong across the plain, and pursued to the very bayonet-points of the Imperial Guard. Checked by the firm appearance of the infantry, the victorious horsemen fell back, and joined their comrades of the reserve, who having followed across the river, had taken post in front of Gröbern.

The battle was again sinking into a cannonade and distant *tirailleur* fight, when another cavalry charge was made.

The Prince of Wirtemberg, though he had failed in repeated attempts to carry the village of Wachau, still maintained a threatening position in its front. Exposed to a heavy fire of artillery from which the men suffered severely, more than half his guns had also been dismounted, when two Russian batteries were sent to his aid. They were placed on the left of his position, and told with great effect, the shot plunging into the French masses, still crowded inactively together behind the village. Among the troops most exposed to this destructive fire, was the cuirassier division commanded by General Bordesoult. This officer, perceiving the hostile guns to be feebly protected, fancied they could be carried by a sudden onrush, and made the attempt accordingly. Dashing forward at the head of ten squadrons, while eight were ordered to follow as a reserve, he charged and captured the guns, and rode down a battalion of Russian infantry that was in support. Passing to the left of the Prince of Wirtemberg's infantry, he advanced into the plain; attacked and overthrew the light cavalry of the Russian Guard; engaged a regiment of cuirassiers that came to their support; and, joined by his own reserve, though left without farther aid, pursued his success till his advanced party reached the village of Gossa.

A little to the south-west of this village is a small hill, or elevation of ground, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country, and, from traditions of the Thirty Years' War, still termed the Warder's Mount. Here the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia had taken post: from here they witnessed the

rapid progress of the French, the capture of the guns, the overthrow of the Russian light horse, and the advance of the hostile cavalry through the intervals of their own line, towards the very point where they were themselves stationed. It was, by all accounts, a trying moment: the swarms of vanquished horsemen, preceding in their flight the advancing conquerors, probably concealed the small force of the pursuers; and the number of staff idlers always attendant on head-quarters, especially, we may suppose, on the head-quarters of kings and emperors, failed not to augment the apparent danger, and to represent the monarchs themselves as in peril. Fortunately, Prince Schwarzenberg arrived before the needless alarm had time to produce mischievous effects; and however questionable his arrangements for the battle may be considered, all parties admit that nothing could exceed the calmness and judgment he displayed during its progress. He assured the sovereigns that nothing was to be apprehended from a body of unsupported cavalry certain of being soon exhausted and disordered by their own efforts. And the result fully justified the assertion.

Charged in front by the Cossacks of the Guard,* the French were first arrested in their progress; attacked in flank by the Prussian dragoons of Neumark, they were completely thrown; and two squadrons of lancers arriving to the aid of the Allies, the mail-clad men were driven at sword's point from the field, forced to abandon

* These troops are very different from the ordinary Cossacks. The men are of gigantic stature, and mounted on horses of proportionate size; and as they retain the high-raised Cossack saddle—the most extraordinary of all saddles—they rather resemble the dromedary corps, formerly said to have been attached to the French army in Egypt, than the light-armed and lightly-mounted warriors of the Don.

in their hasty flight the guns they had captured, the only trophies of their momentary success. So wild was the rout now rushing in upon the French position, that the artillerymen of the Guard, fearing to be swept away by the torrent, poured volleys of grape upon the disordered multitude. Men and steeds, friends and foes, went down before the iron hail; and the Russians and Prussians, checked by its murderous effect, hastened to shelter their diminished ranks beyond the fatal range.

Napoleon, who from a hill between Wachau and Lieberwolkowitz was observing the progress of the action, no sooner saw the first rapid and successful advance of Bordesoult's horsemen, than turning to Count Daru, who was near him, he said with a smile—"Well, the world turns again in our favour"—*le monde tourne encore pour nous;* and then, as ready to deceive others as to deceive himself perhaps, he sent to inform the King of Saxony that a victory had been gained, and directed all the bells of Leipzig to be rung in honour of the conquest achieved!

To what extent he may himself have been imposed upon, we have no means of knowing; but certain it is, that so transient a smile of fortune should not have deceived a clear observer for a single moment. The unsupported advance of a body of horse, the capture of a few guns, and the overthrow of some squadrons of cavalry, could lead to no decisive results. Events had shown that the period of military delusions was at an end, and that it was not by minor and partial advantages that great victories could be gained. In such a field the overthrow of myriads could alone turn the scale of battle; and Napoleon had not even assailed the army he had challenged! His masses still stood motionless behind the position of Wachau. A hundred thousand men were

ready to strike home for victory: but if the courage of the soldier was there, that of the commander was wanting; and though the arm was raised, the blow descended with so total a want of force, that historians have not ventured to record the feeble effort.

It was half-past three o'clock when the allied cavalry, checked by the fire of the French guns, desisted from the pursuit of Bordesoult's broken cuirassiers; and as some hours of light yet remained, Napoleon resolved to effect against the collected mass of his enemies, what he had not attempted against their scattered forces at an earlier part of the day. General Meerfeld was still endeavouring to force the passage of the Pleisse; and the first line of the Allies, though greatly reduced in numbers, still held Mark-Kleberg, Seifershayen, and the ground in front of Wachau; but their main strength and reserves were assembled in deep and compact bodies, extending from Costewitz, by Gossa and Possnau, to Fuschayn on the extreme right. The position was on all points perfectly open to attack; it derived no strength from the nature of the ground, but enabled the troops to support each other, and placed them in perfect communication from flank to flank. Against masses thus prepared, it was only by a general and decided onset that victory could be achieved; and for a moment such an onset was expected by one party, and intended perhaps by the other.

On their own right, the second corps of the French army, supported by two divisions of the Guard under Marshal Victor, pushed forward into the plain. The weak column, under Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg, which had so long held the ground in front of Wachau, unable to oppose such numerous foes, fell back fighting, and took post behind the farm of Auerhayn, which immediately became the scene of a sanguinary combat. Taken and

retaken, it remained for a time in possession of the French, who attempted no farther advance, and only continued the action by a heavy, and from the nature of the ground, telling fire of artillery.

In the centre of the field the fifth corps had also moved forward, and having reached the heights in front of Gossa, detached troops to attack the village: it was partially captured, but retaken by the Prussians after a severe and stubborn combat. The French renewed the onset. Supported by the fire of a numerous artillery, General Maison led his whole division to the attack. The action, though sharply contested for a time, ended in the complete overthrow of the assailants, who were chased in confusion across the plain; the General, as he himself admits, having only escaped captivity by the speed of his horse.

Farther to the left, Marshal Mortier, extending the attack, advanced towards the upper wood, situated between Gossa and Possnau; but his efforts seem to have been feebly made. All attempts to carry the wood, and dispossess the Allies of the village of Possnau, having failed, the troops took post on the swelling ground in front of Lieberwolkowitz, a few hundred yards in advance of their original position. Along the whole line, the battle was now reduced to a mere cannonade, maintained with great vigour, and on some points with fatal effect, till friendly darkness closed her wing upon the plain, and separated the wearied and exhausted combatants.

The recapture of the farm of Auerhayn by the Austrians and Prussians, was the last scene of the battle of Wachau. The long combat, or succession of partial combats rather, left the French centre a few hundred yards in advance of the position they had occupied in the morning, and might, therefore, give them some

nominal claim to victory, though in fact it was already an evident defeat. They had lost a day, at a time when every hour was precious; thousands had fallen without benefit to the cause, at a moment when the army was encompassed in a hostile land, distant from all reinforcements, and without the slightest hope of aid from any quarter; they had been arrested in their progress by an army of equal strength, but on the eve of being joined by a hundred thousand additional men: and not to have been eminently successful in such a situation, was to have been defeated. Napoleon might, no doubt, have been worsted had he engaged the Allies in general and close battle, but then he had also the ordinary chances of success in his favour, whilst delay brought certain ruin: and not to have struck home for victory on the 16th, and when he purposely came to seek for battle, evinces a want of mental courage which history will not overlook in favour of the extravagant romances by which his idolaters have tried to disfigure the events of this memorable day.

We allude to the grand cavalry attack described by French, English, and German writers: an attack made, we are told, by the King of Naples with 8000 horse, entire divisions of infantry, and a hundred pieces of artillery; and which, after carrying death and havoc into the centre of the Allied Army, only failed of complete success, owing to causes over which the genius of Napoleon could exercise no control. The unsuccessful charge of Bordesoult's cuirassiers constitutes the only foundation for all these fables; and it did not even require the *uncontradicted* statement of the distinguished officer who led the onset, to show that the whole was a "splendid conception," not of Napoleon but of his worshippers.

It is usual to say that the Emperor desisted from farther attacks on this occasion—from completing the victory gained according to French writers—in consequence of the heavy fire heard in the direction of Mökern and Lindenau, and of the passage of the Pleisse, which General Meerfeld had effected at Dölitz. It would be doing him great injustice to credit these statements: for a decisive victory gained over the Bohemian army, would have far more than counterbalanced any loss sustained on other points, and might still have turned the campaign in his favour.

On the left bank of the Elster, General Giulay had attacked the village of Lindenau, situated at the head of the causeway leading across the marshes before described; and had actually carried that important post on which the retreat of the French army depended. But by one of those unaccountable oversights which so often happen in war, he neglected to break down the bridge over the river; and Bertrand, to whom the defence of the vital post had been entrusted, fully conscious that the total ruin of the army might be the consequence of its loss, attacked the Austrians in his turn, and dispossessed them of the valuable prize.

On the banks of the Pleisse, the French had also gained some advantage. When Schwarzenberg, to support the threatened centre of the Allied Army, withdrew the Austrian reserves from the swampy meadows between the two rivers, he directed Count Meerfeld to renew his efforts against Cannewitz, to force the passage if possible, or at all events to draw the enemy's attention to the flank attack, and away from the centre. The General obeyed his orders; and having, after repeated failures to force the passage at Cannewitz, discovered a ford near Dölitz, he plunged into the muddy stream at

the head of a body of infantry, and gained the opposite bank. The ford was, however, so narrow, that a few files only could pass at a time; and the Austrians had only formed a single battalion when they were attacked by Poniatowsky's Poles, and Curial's division of the Old Guard. Such a contest was necessarily brief: Meerfeld's troops were overthrown, and all who escaped the sword were captured along with their General.

But these trifling advantages in the south could not balance the victory achieved by Blücher in the north. Advancing early in the morning, agreeably to the preconcerted arrangements, he intended to march right down upon Leipzig; but arrived on the heights of Litschena, the woods and villages to the left were already discovered to be filled with French troops. Forests concealed the extent of the position occupied, and the strength of the enemy; but columns advancing by the Düben road—it was the division of Delmas escorting some parks of artillery—led to the belief that part of the French army were still in the rear, and ready to fall upon the left flank of the Silesian army if too hastily pushed forward. The thunder of artillery, heard in the direction of Wachau, called upon them to advance; but at this moment Sir Charles Stewart, now Marquis of Londonderry, arrived with the intelligence, that the Crown Prince of Sweden was marching, not upon the field of battle, but upon Halle: and Blücher, thus abandoned to his own resources, was obliged to take measures accordingly.*

* On this, as on all occasions, the Marquis of Londonderry displayed the greatest possible zeal, energy, and activity. By desire of Blücher, he galloped back to the Prince's head-quarters to urge him to advance, but could not obtain an interview with his Royal Highness: General Adlercrutz, the Adjutant-General, promised

Forming front to the left, Count Langeron was directed to attack the villages of Radefeld and Lindenthal; but the enemy falling rapidly back from this direction, and showing considerable forces round Mökern, on the high road to Leipzig, new dispositions had to be made, and time was lost. At last Yorck with his Prussians was able to fall on, and the vigour of the attack tended greatly to atone for the delay which had taken place. Marmont's corps, one of the strongest and most efficient in the army, defended the position: the Prussians were of nearly similar strength. Both parties had now a fair battle-field on which to try their skill and courage; and it must be admitted that both supported in noble style their just claim to gallant soldiership. The combat was long and sanguinary; the village of Mökern was several times taken and retaken; and it was not till nightfall that victory finally crowned the efforts of the assailants. Blücher, seizing an opportunity when the left wing of the

however, that 3000 cavalry should be sent forward. The Marquis then returned to the field of battle, and at night was again at the Prince's head-quarters with the news of the victory. Some of the letters he addressed to Bernadotte during these operations are highly curious, and very creditable to the direct, honest, and manly feeling of the writer; but certainly composed in the very worst style that could possibly have been selected for the purpose of making a proper impression on a vain man like the Prince Royal. In a letter written on the evening of the 16th, the Marquis says, "*I speak to you now as a soldier; and if you do not commence your march, you will repent it as long as you live.*" The Prince was indignant; and the next time he saw Sir Charles, he said to him, "*Comment! Général Stewart, quel droit avez vous de m'écrire? Ne vous rappellez vous pas que je suis Prince de Suede et un des plus grands généraux de mon temps? Et si vous etiez à ma place, que penseriez vous si quelque un vous ecrivait comme vous m'avez écrit?*" The Marquis might, perhaps, have answered that he could not well place himself in his Royal Highness' situation, as he had never been a day too late for the fight. It would be a great injustice to his Lordship to estimate his valuable services during these campaigns by his very indifferent account of them.

French infantry were engaged with the Prussians on open plain, broke in upon them with the whole force of his cavalry, and completely routed them. The right wing and centre thus turned, hastened to fall back, and, favoured by the night and the exhausted state of the victors, effected their object; leaving, however, forty guns, an eagle, and 2000 prisoners, in the hands of the conquerors.

Darkness now closed upon the vast scene of havoc, and comparative silence replaced the long and fearful storm of battle; but to the inhabitants of Leipzig, the thousand watch-fires, the burning villages that surrounded the city with a sea of flame, made night seem more hideous than even day had been. Fugitives, *employés*, followers of the army, were hurrying into the city from all quarters; shoals of maimed and wounded, imploring surgical aid, and food to still the cravings of hunger, filled every street. The hospitals were overcrowded, and provisions had long been so scarce, that with the best will to assist, the citizens had little to give; and numbers of the unhappy sufferers bled to death, or perished from want, along the cold pavement. Misery was at its height, and offered a frightful contrast to the merry chime ringing from every steeple in honour of the victory claimed by those who already bore want and wretchedness marked in their very appearance.

Napoleon's tents were pitched for the night in the centre of the square of the Old Guard, in a hollow formed by a dried-up fish-pond; and here the Austrian General Meerfeld was introduced to him. By a strange caprice of fortune, this was the same officer who had formerly negotiated the treaty of Campo Formio with Bonaparte, then General of the Army of Italy: he had then negotiated with Napoleon when in the ascendant, and was

now to negotiate for him when on the verge of ruin. After some words of courtesy on the chances of war and the misfortune of being taken prisoner, Napoleon proceeded in these terms:—"This war is becoming very serious. You see how they attack me, and how I defend myself. Does your cabinet reflect on the consequences of such exasperation? If it is wise, it will do so: it can do so this evening, to-morrow it may be too late: for who can foretell the events of to-morrow? Our political alliance is at an end; but between your master and me there is another bond which is indissoluble. This I now invoke; for I shall ever place the most perfect reliance on the noble sentiments of my father-in-law. Go to your Emperor, therefore, and repeat to him the proposals made through General Bubna. I know I must make sacrifices, and I am ready to make them." Having then entered into the details of these proposed terms and offered to evacuate Germany, and retire beyond the Rhine if an armistice were immediately granted, he dismissed the General with these words: "When on my behalf you speak of an armistice to the two Emperors, your voice will not fail to be eloquent by the recollections it must awaken."

General Meerfeld, having had his sword returned, was immediately conducted to the advanced posts of the Allies; but it was not till the armies had reached the banks of the Rhine that an answer was sent to his message.

18TH OCTOBER,
THE GENERAL ACTION.

The armies remained tranquilly in their camps during the night that followed on the sanguinary combats of

Mökern and Wachau, but in both hosts the opinion was general that the action would be renewed in the morning; and long before dawn the troops stood to their arms; Princes, Sovereigns, and Marshals, were at their post, and every thing prepared for combat. The silence continued, however, unbroken; and except on the right of the Partha, where the fiery spirit of Blücher urged him to drive in the advanced parties of the French before he was aware of Schwarzenberg's intention to delay the attack, all remained peaceful on the iron-girt plain.

At a council of war held early in the morning, the Allied Princes, who expected reinforcements to the amount of nearly a hundred thousand men, resolved to delay the attack till the following day. Blücher had, however, assailed and carried the village of Gohlis, and driven the French from the right bank of the Partha, before he was informed of the new arrangement.

Napoleon made no movement or change of disposition. The 7th corps under Reynier joined the army, and took post in the line, but no preparations were made for retreat in case of reverse; and at a moment when every minute was of value, twenty-four hours were again lost in total inactivity. He had just failed to make an impression on the Allied Army when contending against them with nearly equal numbers; he knew that a hundred thousand men, or large reinforcements at least, were ready to join them; and he yet waited the battle against this overwhelming multitude without taking the slightest measure of precaution: he trusted every thing to chance and the bravery of his troops, and seemed tacitly to acknowledge himself the mere plaything of capricious fortune.

The 17th, the last day of hope passed, and as no

answer came to the propositions sent by Meerfeld, the fate of battle alone remained to be tried; and with the certainty of being assailed on the morrow, it became necessary to concentrate the diminished host more closely round Leipzig. At two in the morning the retrograde movement commenced, and under the most gloomy auspices: for the night was cold and stormy; the rain fell in torrents, and the fierce red glare cast by the watch-fires of half a million of men now assembled round the trembling city, and by the flames ascending from the burning villages of Probstheyda, Stötteritz, Holtzhausen, and Schönfels, tended only to augment the horror of the murky darkness which they rendered visible without dispelling. While the change of position was in progress, Napoleon drove to Reüdnitz, where he had a long conference with Marshal Ney; from thence he proceeded to Lindenau, and directed General Bertrand to march upon Wissenfels, and secure the passes of the Saale. These instructions given, he returned to Stötteritz, where his head-quarters had been established.

The new position the French troops had taken up while the Emperor was making this nightly round, commenced at Cannewitz on the Pleisse, where their right was stationed, and extended in a straight line running from west to east, as far as the large village of Probstheyda, whence it swept in an irregular curve by Zweinansdorf and Paunsdorf, as far as Schönfels on the Partha; and then turning east, and following the left bank of the stream, again reached the Pleisse close under the barricaded suburbs of Leipzig. Both wings thus rested on the river, the one facing south, the other north, and could not easily be turned. In other respects, the position, which presented a front of nearly ten miles in extent, had no advantage beyond what it derived from

the many strong villages enclosed within its circumference, and from the skill and ability the French troops always displayed in the defence of such posts. But if this position had no leading feature of strength or weakness, it laboured under the frightful defect of having only one road by which the army could retreat in case of reverse. With the means that Leipzig furnished, twenty bridges might have been thrown over the rivers and marshes in as many hours; but not a single one was in progress when the battle commenced.

A little in advance of the hamlet of Thonberg, and to the right of the road leading from Leipzig to Probstheyda, is a small hill or elevation commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country. This eminence Napoleon had fixed upon as the station he intended to occupy during the action, and it was from this post, which he only left twice and for short periods, that he afterwards beheld the greatest and most eventful of his battles.

The 18th of October, a day that outweighs many centuries in importance, dawned at last, and the first rays of light found the hosts under arms and ready for combat. The Allies, marshalled for assault, were divided into four large columns. On the left, the first column, composed of 40,000 Austrians under the Prince of Hesse-Homberg, was destined to assail the French right at Dölitz and Cannewitz. Fifty-five thousand Russians and Prussians, under Barclay de Tolly, formed the second column, and were destined to advance by Wachau and Lieberwolkowitz towards Probstheyda. Farther to the right came the third column under Benningsen, consisting of the Russian army of reserve, the Austrian divisions of Klenau, Bubna, and the Cossacks of Platow. This column, amounting to 60,000 men, was to

move upon Holtzhausen and Zulkelhausen, directing itself upon Leipzig. The interval between the right of Benningsen and the left bank of the Partha was destined for the battle-field of the fourth column, led on by the Crown Prince of Sweden, and composed of the Army of the North, of the corps of Langeron detached from the army of Silesia, and which Blücher had for this day placed under the orders of his Royal Highness. The corps of Yorck and Sacken, the remains of the gallant army of Silesia, reduced to about 25,000 men, confronted the entrenched suburbs of Leipzig at the junction of the Pleisse and the Partha, and were not, owing to the great loss they had sustained in the previous actions, intended to take any decided share in the battle. Giulay, with his 20,000 Austrians, was still beyond the marshes on the left bank of the Elster. If we suppose that twelve thousand of the Allies fell in the combats of Wachau and Mökern, it still leaves two hundred and eighty thousand men arrayed against the French, who, after the departure of Bertrand's corps, and the losses sustained on the 16th, had probably little more than half that number present in the field.

Nor was it in numbers alone that the French were inferior to their enemies: always brave, they were inferior in that high tone of confidence which may be termed the very spirit of victory, and which had so long cheered them in battle, but had now been crushed by so many reverses at the very time when about to encounter adversaries animated with the best and noblest enthusiasm that ever nerved the hearts of patriot men. An actor in the great scene can best describe how this lofty feeling was displayed. "When the troops were formed," says the gallant author of the Recollections of the Liberating War, "the word Forward was given, and

all advanced towards the rising ground as steadily as if exercising before the King on parade. At this moment the sun, as if to light us on to victory and witness our battle, burst bright and clear through the heavy clouds that darkened the horizon; arms sparkled in the brilliant beams; and every heart beat higher, cheered by the glorious omen. Then it was that the Colberg Jägers and the regiment of the Prince of Prussia raised the patriot song, 'Hail to Thee in victor's crown.' The enthusiasm spread, the bands struck up, and to the chorus of a thousand voices that repeated the hymn we continued to ascend the hill. Scarcely had the points of the bayonets glanced above the brow, when the first shell came sounding through the air. This I thought would change our tune; but not so,—louder rose the voices, and higher rang the martial and patriotic air. It was only when we reached the summit of the height, and saw Leipzig with its wide plain, its wild and busy scene of strife presented before us, when our guns unlimbering opened their fire, that the voice of song was drowned amid the general roar of battle." These were the "rabble Landwehr," as Napoleon called them, who were to fly on the first approach of the French troops!

Before we proceed to give an account of the battle, it is necessary to explain in what manner the corps of Langeron came to be placed under the orders of Bernadotte; as it tends to show how many were the elements of dangerous weakness, mixed up in the composition of the Allied Army, and how many openings must have been presented had there been a skilful adversary prepared to strike at them.

When the Crown Prince of Sweden brought up his army on the 17th, he called upon Marshal Blücher to resign to him the right of the line in the general order

of battle, which for his own convenience, and greatly to the inconvenience of the Silesian army, he had forced upon the latter after the passage of the Elbe. Blücher, not wishing to see the Army of the North placed in a situation that presented so many openings for inactivity, flatly refused to comply with this demand, and declined even to hold a conference with the Prince. Urged, however, to meet his Royal Highness, in order to arrange the plan of attack, he consented to wait upon him, and accompanied by Prince William of Prussia, the King's brother, repaired to the Swedish head-quarters at Brietenfels, on the morning of the 18th. At this conference Bernadotte declared that he would not attack on the left bank of the Partha, unless 30,000 men of the army of Silesia—more than half its number—were placed at his disposal for that purpose ; and if this extraordinary demand astonished all who were present, the immediate compliance of Blücher could hardly fail to heighten the amazement. The Prussian Field-Marshal, waving all minor considerations, keeping only the great cause itself in view, instantly placed the corps of Langeron, amounting to nearly the force demanded, at his Royal Highness's disposal, only reserving to himself the right of commanding these troops, the greater part of his army, under the Prince's orders. Though this was probably more than was desired, it left no farther opening for prevarication ; and when the commanders reached the head of their columns, the guns of the Bohemian army already told that the battle had commenced.

The Austrians were the first to set on. The Prince of Hesse-Homberg, advancing against the right of the enemy, attacked Dölitz and Losniz so vigorously, that Napoleon was obliged to lead part of the Guard to the aid of Poniatowsky and Augereau, who defended those

points. The Austrians, unable to carry the village of Cannewitz, were arrested in their progress; but while this momentary success cheered the efforts of the right wing, the battle was extending along the whole line, and enclosing the French in an absolute circle of fire.

Blücher no sooner heard the action fully engaged in the south, than he prepared to cross the Partha. Observing that the French were marching troops from the neighbourhood of Leipzig towards Probstheyda, and fearing that Napoleon was collecting forces to strike a blow at the Bohemian army before it could be assisted by the Armies of the North, he hastened, with his usual daring and decision, to join the battle before evil consequences could accrue. The Crown Prince had, indeed, sent orders for Langeron's corps, placed as we have seen under his command, to cross the Partha at Taucha,—a movement that would have rendered a circuitous march of four hours necessary. But Blücher was at his post; and true to his character, replied that the corps should await the Prince's orders on the left bank of the river,—and having obtained promises both from Generals Bülow and Wizingerode, that they would support the attack whatever might be the orders of Bernadotte, resolved at once to force the passage.

A battery of thirty-six twelve-pounders was opened against Schönfels, and under the protection of their telling fire the Russian infantry forded the stream opposite Möckau, the water in some places reaching breast high. Marshal Ney occupied the left bank with some of the most efficient corps in the French army; but seeing his right wing turned by Blücher's movement, he threw it back on Sellerhausen, and then keeping Schönfels in his front, defended the ground with all the daring

energy for which he was distinguished. Taken and retaken, the corse-encumbered ruins of Schönfels remained in the hands of the Allies, after 10,000 men had dyed with their blood the fatal field on which the "Bravest of the Brave" encountered the stern victor of the Katzbach.

While this sanguinary combat was waging round Schönfels, Barclay de Tolly and Benningsen had also advanced to the attack; and the Crown Prince, carried away by the general impulse of the troops more perhaps than by zeal for the cause, had crossed the Partha. Bülow's corps, forming the extreme left of the Army of the North, had scarcely passed through Taucha, when it came upon a brigade of Wirtemberg cavalry under General Norman, and a battalion of Saxon infantry stationed as an advanced guard on a small eminence called the *Heitere-Blick*. These troops, instead of retiring or preparing for defence, went over to the Allies, as two squadrons of cavalry had done at an earlier part of the day. And the loud cheers that rose from the German ranks, to greet the return of these German soldiers to the cause of their country, helped, perhaps, to bring about the more important event of the same nature that immediately followed.

Bülow, having driven Darutte's divison from Paunsdorf, pushed on towards Sellerhausen, where the remains of Reynier's corps was stationed. In the ranks of this corps were two Saxon brigades, consisting of eleven greatly reduced battalions, counting less than 4000 effective men, with twenty-eight pieces of artillery. These troops finding themselves threatened in front by Bülow, and on the right by the masses of Benningsen, who was already in communication with the Army of

the North, aware also that some of their countrymen had already joined the Allies, followed the example thus set; and, without the least previous accord, went over in a body to the Prussians, all the efforts of their commander, General Zeschau, failing to restrain them under the banners of Napoleon. And such was the enmity entertained by these soldiers against their late allies, that they expressed the most ardent desire instantly to turn their arms against them. This was indeed objected to; the soldiers were sent to the rear; but the Saxon guns were brought into action at a later period of the day.

Small as the force was which thus forsook the French cause, the moral strength of the blow inflicted by their departure was tremendous indeed: the tidings spread lightning-like through both hosts, proclaiming victory to one party, almost certain defeat to the other. Nor need such effect surprise us. Military history records many instances of mutiny and desertion; troops have often forsaken their standards, and bands enlisted in favour of a cause one day, have refused to fight for it on the next; but there never before was an instance of disciplined soldiers going over by thousands, in regular battle array and amidst the fire of combat, to the very enemies they were drawn up to oppose! The French and Saxon troops had long fought in the same ranks; and the wild nature of military life, the habit of sharing dangers and privations together, of lending and receiving aid in toil and difficulty, awakens in gallant breasts a species of rude affection towards comrades and fellow-soldiers, far stronger than any which peaceful life can know or share. And yet even this link was now broken, and the Saxons forsook their comrades on the very brink of fate: a step so novel, unheard of, and

extraordinary, that it shook, even to its foundation, the remaining fabric of Napoleon's power.*

The defection of these troops being frequently described by historians as the very pivot on which his fortunes turned, it may be right here to show that it ought to have been foreseen by every man endued with the most ordinary insight into human character; as it arose from causes known to all, and certain sooner or later to produce such a result, however novel and extraordinary it may appear. Whatever unfavourable influence the defection of these Allies exercised on Napoleon's fortune must therefore be charged to his own want of judgment.

The Saxon troops were not mercenaries sworn to follow, in every cause or direction, the banner under which they had enlisted. They were the children of the soil, the soldiers of the conscription, forced into the ranks by an arbitrary law, which called them forth under the plea that their country and sovereign required their services. But from the highest to the lowest, every Saxon soldier felt that in fighting the battles of Napoleon, he was fighting for a cause hateful alike to the people and the sovereign. Taken from among the people, the soldiers shared the sentiments of their countrymen. They saw the ruin the French alliance brought upon the land; saw their native hamlets and villages plundered and given to the flames by their pre-

* "But there exhausted fortune quits the field,
And Leipzig's treason bids the unvanquished yield;
The Saxon jackal leaves the lion's side
To turn the bear's, and wolf's, and fox's guide."—*Byron.*

It shows how deeply rooted is the liberal and fashionable admiration of Napoleon, when even a man of Byron's genius could write in this manner.

tended allies; they beheld friends, kindred, parents, driven from their homes, and often forced to resign even their last morsel of food to the fierce and rapacious soldiers of Napoleon; and could not fail, therefore, to participate in the deep hatred every honest Saxon entertained of his country's oppressor.

The sympathy felt by all the German troops for the general cause of their native land, was besides well known; and from the very first, desertions had been frequent. When Napoleon was following Blücher beyond the Bober at the commencement of the campaign, some Wirtemberg squadrons already went over to the Prussians; Saxon horsemen forsook the King of Naples while pursuing the Allies after the battle of Dresden,—in the very hour of victory therefore; and Marshal Ney, in the official report of the rout of Dennewitz, declares the foreign troops to be so extremely disaffected, "as to leave no doubt of their turning their arms against France on the very first occasion." With all these warning facts clearly before him, Napoleon yet placed these troops in front line, and thus furnished them with the best possible "occasion" for following the impulse to which, under similar circumstances, all ordinary mortals would most certainly have yielded: it was thrusting men into the centre of the torrent, and then railing at them for being carried away by the force of the waters. It is true that the Emperor, aware of the disaffection existing in the Saxon army, had a few days before harangued these very soldiers with the view of confirming them in their allegiance to his cause. This harangue, delivered in French, was translated into very indifferent German by Caulaincourt; and if properly interpreted, it told the Saxons that the "man of destiny" was a mortal of such humble endowments, that he could not, after ten years'

rule in Germany, command a single sentence of the language spoken by the millions over whom he wished to hold absolute sway. It is almost needless to add, that the address was listened to in gloomy and eloquent silence: not a single cheer having been raised in reply.

The tidings of this defection shook even the callous frame of Napoleon: his brow was darkened, and for a moment his face was even distorted: he termed the step "treason;" but had to hear it observed in answer, that "the revolt of the troops was the natural consequence of the hatred which the ruin of the country had excited in all classes of the people, citizens as well as soldiers."

The slow and cautious, we might perhaps say timid, conduct of Schwarzenberg, prevented him from immediately availing himself of this great advantage. His losses were also considerable: for the action was now engaged along the entire front; a hundred combats shook the plain; and from the Pleisse to the Partha, every wood, hamlet, copse, or village, was filled with hostile bands, contending fiercely for mastery. A blaze of fire, accompanied by an incessant roar of musketry and artillery, marked the whole line of the battle, and showed that death was busy though victory was making slow progress. While men were falling fast in these sanguinary contests, Barclay de Tolly was ordered to assail Probstheyda, one of the main points of the French position. The attack was made with distinguished gallantry; under command of Prince Augustus of Prussia, Russians and Prussians penetrated repeatedly into the village, and captured several of the enemy's guns; but close upon the hostile corps of Victor and Lauriston, who sent column after column to support the defenders, they were unable to hold their ground, and momentary success led but to ultimate defeat. The Allied Sovereigns,

who from an eminence in front of Mansdorf observed the severe loss sustained in these unsuccessful attacks, directed the troops to be withdrawn, and placed under cover behind the swelling ground, the task of continuing the action being left solely to the artillery.

The pause thus occasioned in the assault enabled Napoleon to carry assistance to the left wing, already weakened by so many losses and by the defection of the Saxons. Having despatched General Nansouty with twenty guns and the Cuirassiers of the Guard to fill the gap left by the Germans, he placed himself at the head of a division of the Guard, and led them to the aid of Marshal Ney. Along the whole of their left the French had suffered severely; they had, after murderous conflicts, been driven from Melkau, Stantz, Sellershausen, and Zweinansdorf; and though Benningsen had failed to carry Stötteritz, situated nearer the French centre, Blücher, on the extreme left, had been successful. He had approached to the very suburbs of Leipzig; and observing that, to support other points, French troops were withdrawn from the entrenchments round the Phaffendorf gate, immediately caused General Sacken to attack the works.

The reinforcements led by Napoleon could not retrieve these losses; but favoured, perhaps, by the exhausted state of the combatants, they arrested the farther progress of the Allies, and brought the action along this front also to a stand. The battle was now continued only by artillery: a thousand guns hurled deadly missiles upon the French, who replied quick and well indeed, but with sinking forces; the iron circle was closing around them with fatal grasp, and from the whole circumference a storm of fire was poured in upon their devoted bands. On some points the carnage was frightful. The

corps of Victor and Lauriston, exposed without shelter to the hostile batteries, suffered dreadfully; shot after shot plunged into the crowded columns, covering even the unwounded with the blood and quivering particles of flesh torn from their mangled comrades; and the soldiers, maddened by the ruin they were tamely forced to witness, rushed wildly forward, and more than once attempted to seize the guns that occasioned this frightful carnage. But the efforts were vain; for showers of grape only swept down the front ranks of the brave more surely and more fatally, the nearer they approached the death-dealing engines.

Hours rolled on, and slaughter continued unabated; but no manly line-to-line combat was there,—no gallant home-charge of cavalry shaking the very earth, and decisive of the fate of armies. The battle was fought by heavy columns attacking posts and villages, by artillery, and skirmishers. Swarms of *tirailleurs* contended for every piece of broken ground; gardens, villas, farms, and enclosures, were scenes of strife; but on clear and open plain, the fairest field for fighting-men, no blow was struck. On such ground the troops stood motionless, in heavy masses of cavalry or infantry, protecting the countless artillery, to the destructive fire of which the battle was now as evening closed entirely reduced. It was only with the setting sun that the work of death ended.

And wild as the tumult over which it had shone was the setting of the sun that beamed a farewell to the thousands dying on the plains of Leipzig. Seen through the sulphury vapours of the long-continued fight, its frowning disc appeared of double magnitude; and fiery red and grimly threatening was the glare it cast on the wide scene of carnage below. Clothed in bloody garb, it withdrew

from the blood-stained earth, as if grieving to lighten the corse-covered field on which its parting rays were cast. The setting sun, always so mild and friendly at its close, seemed now to part in storm-predicting wrath ; and brave survivors of the mighty combat often declared in after years, that they never beheld so wild a sunset as the one which closed the great battle-day of Leipzig. May the world never look upon its like again !

To the French belongs the honour of having fired the last gun in the field. They had not been defeated ; they had lost ground on the right, and been greatly forced back on the left ; but on no point had they been broken or overthrown. The conduct of the troops had been admirable ; in all ranks, from scar-covered marshals commanding corps down to the youngest conscripts who made their first essay in arms, soldiership of the highest order had been displayed ; but of generalship evinced in the conduct of the battle we find no proof whatever. Judging, on the contrary, from the broad outline of facts tried by self-evident principles, we are bound to say that a great want of skill only could cause a General to be completely defeated, while his troops still presented a bold and unbroken front to the enemy. Placed as the French were, contending against overwhelming numbers, cut off from supplies, having no aid or assistance to expect, it was impossible that mere passive resistance, however brave, could save them from ultimate defeat ; and yet we find no attempt made to avert such a catastrophe, either by a timely retreat, or by some of those brilliant movements which have distinguished the battles of great soldiers, and immortalized the fame of their authors. To ascribe the defeat to the desertion of the Saxons, is a puerility hardly deserving reply : for the Allies had a hundred thousand men who took no share

in the action; and weighed against such a mass, the defection of four or five thousand men from the French ranks can count as absolutely nothing. The Allies did not even strike at the opening left by the Saxons: on no part was the French line broken through; and the battle was rather a slow and gradual pressing down of the enemy, than a complete and victorious overthrow. Had Schwarzenberg directed some fifty thousand men of these vast and inactive reserves against the weaker points of the French line, it is impossible to see how they could have escaped total destruction: their safety is due, therefore, to the cautious policy of the allied commander, much more than to the conduct of their own leader.

Some will ask, perhaps, what were the great and decisive blows, capable of bringing fortune back to his standard, which Napoleon could have struck, and yet neglected to strike on this occasion? Such questions are as idle as unfair, and tend only to impose upon the unreflecting: history does not profess to give lectures on strategy; and a battle may present a thousand openings to a skilful commander, which, depending entirely on momentary circumstances, can only be appreciated on the spot, at the instant, and by persons possessing the full knowledge of the relative situation of the contending parties which generally belongs to the leader of an army. We cannot, therefore, say what Napoleon might have done; but it is well known that prompt measures and decisive resources in danger constitute one of the principal and most brilliant characteristics of a great soldier.

Nor will history be satisfied with merely examining the manner in which a battle has been conducted: it will inquire into the motives which occasioned the fighting of a stern and sanguinary combat. And this Napoleon's

worshippers will find it difficult to explain. After the undecided action of the 16th, when the French failed, with nearly equal forces, to overthrow the Allies—when they lost far more against Blücher than they gained against Schwarzenberg—it was perfectly evident that a renewed battle against their army augmented by entire corps—a hundred thousand men as it proved—could lead to no satisfactory results ; could not lead even to the attainment of the nearest object of a defensive battle—that of enabling the victors to maintain their ground. Already sinking beneath the pressure of want, cut off from supplies and reinforcements, deprived even of the power of renewing their ammunition, they were strategically defeated before the chances of combat were tried. The retreat might have commenced on the evening of the 17th, after the unbroken rest of that day, with far greater advantages than on the 18th, when the troops retired from a blood-stained battle-field in all the disorder which follows a long and sternly-contested action. By retiring after the battle, they proclaimed themselves beaten and their adversaries victorious ; and at the very time when they handed to their foes the victor's crown, with all the high, cheering, and enthusiastic feelings which it naturally confers, they necessarily loaded themselves with the bitter consciousness of defeat, and all its spirit-crushing evils. Not a single tenable reason, capable of justifying Napoleon for fighting the battle of the 18th, has ever yet been advanced ; and his idolaters have, therefore, been forced to defend his conduct on grounds which, if admitted, must tell against his cause far more than in its favour.

Napoleon, they assure us, expected an answer to the proposals sent by Meerfeld on the evening of the 16th, and could not weaken the value of the sacrifices he had

offered to make, by immediately commencing a hasty retreat; he also, they say, relied upon the Emperor of Austria, and could not believe that his father-in-law would allow him to be completely crushed. When twenty-four hours brought no answer to proposals which might have been acknowledged in four hours, or in less time—for it was not two hours' gallop from head-quarters to head-quarters—the result might easily have been foreseen. Besides, though the commander of an army may try to better his cause by opening negotiations with an enemy, no man of ordinary sagacity will risk the fate of nations and of armies on the mere chance of proposals being accepted by adversaries almost certain of victory, and who believed—and we think justly—that decided success in the field could alone secure the object for which they were contending. Moscow should have served as a warning at Leipzig.

Equally feeble is the plea that Napoleon had a *right* to depend on his father-in-law: for sovereigns have rarely, if ever, allowed relationship to influence their political conduct: and no man possessing the most ordinary knowledge of history, could suppose that the ruler of a great empire would permit a mere family alliance to change the line of policy he might have adopted as most conducive to the happiness of his people.

The truth is, no doubt, that Napoleon was here, as at Moscow, deceived by the inordinate vanity which so frequently overcame his moderate judgment, and obscured ideas at no time very clear or distinct. He trusted to his star, his fortune, and his fame; and fancied that hostile armies and councils would cower before the influence of his genius; and that the Emperor of Austria, flattered by an alliance with the "man of destiny," would still interpose between him and his enemies. Nothing but the

power of such phantasies could, in our opinion, have induced him to await the storm that burst upon his gallant host in the plains of Leipzig: and he who, at the head of mighty armies, becomes the dupe of such puerile delusions, is a weak and vain man, and nothing more.

Let us now see how rapidly, and while the army yet presented a bold front to the enemy, the consequences of these errors displayed themselves.

At the close of the battle, a number of Generals and Marshals assembled round the Emperor. Silence reigned at the meeting; none wished to speak; there was no deliberation: escape was all that could be hoped for; and that was to be anticipated from the tardiness of the enemy, rather than from any power of enforcing it if promptly and stoutly opposed. Such was now the position of the army, that it had only a single line of retreat left: this lay along the narrow causeway of Lindenau, two miles in length, accessible only at the gate of Leipzig by one bridge over the Pleisse, and the outlet of which could at any time be assailed by the superior forces of the enemy. But there was no alternative; and by the light of a watch-fire, Napoleon, who overcome by fatigue had actually for a time fallen asleep in the midst of his Generals, dictated to Berthier the orders for the retreat. At nine o'clock he left his *bivouac*, and repaired to the hôtel of Prussia in Leipzig, where he sat up the greater part of the night receiving reports and issuing orders. He also informed the King of Saxony of the intended movement, leaving it to him to accompany the army, or make terms with the Allies.

In the city, terror, suffering, and confusion, were at their height: the streets were filled with stragglers seeking their corps, and with wounded soldiers imploring shelter or assistance. The pressure towards the Ranstadt

gate, the only outlet towards the causeway, was frightful: guns, waggons, baggage, herds of cattle, were driven along in total disregard of all who filled the road; cavalry and infantry, camp-followers, dismounted horsemen, sick and wounded, who deemed their strength sufficient to carry them forward, all augmented the crowd, and impeded the progress of the mass by their very anxiety to advance. The shrieks of the wounded, the groans of the bleeding trampled down by the multitude, the explosion beyond the walls of a hundred ammunition-waggons that could not be brought along, recalled to numbers the passage of the Beresina. All night the confusion continued, and day was only to augment the horrors of the scene.

19TH OCTOBER,
ASSAULT AND CAPTURE OF THE CITY.

When Napoleon failed to overthrow the Allied Army on the 16th before they were reinforced by the hundred thousand men who joined on the following day, his defeat, if he tarried at Leipzig, might be looked upon as certain. The valour of his troops, the skill of his officers—aided by the cautious policy of Schwarzenberg—had retarded the catastrophe; but perseverance in a hopeless cause, heightening the stakes when the game was desperate, could tend only to render the final result more extensive and more destructive. And it was only the reckless presumption of Napoleon which could have brought upon a gallant army—though contending against slow and cautious adversaries—the fearful destruction of which we have now to give a feeble sketch.

Daybreak discovered the French in full retreat; and

loud shouts rang through the allied ranks when they found their enemies had abandoned the field of contest, which many thought was still to be disputed. The masses prepared for battle now advanced to the attack of the city itself.

The firing had hardly commenced, when Napoleon withdrew from the town. Between eight and nine o'clock he paid a farewell visit to the King of Saxony, with whom he remained about a quarter of an hour; then mounting his horse, he rode to the Ranstadt gate; but here the throng was so great as to render it impossible even for his attendants to clear a passage. He therefore turned back, and reached the esplanade by the St Peter's gate. The difficulty of reaching the causeway was still however to be surmounted; and as the hostile shot were already bounding over the heads of the crowd, he might have been in some danger, had not a citizen conducted him through a garden, whence he gained the road leading to the outer gate, which he passed more easily than a spectator who witnessed the scene had expected.

All historians assure us, as usual, that Napoleon was perfectly calm and collected on this trying occasion; but Hassel, the very able writer already quoted, tells us, at page 117 of the third edition of his work, that though his features were composed, his agitation was evident, as he was in a violent perspiration, when riding through the gate. On gaining the esplanade, he took at first an entirely wrong direction, and had proceeded some distance towards the enemy before he recollected himself. He then turned round and inquired if there were no side-road towards Borna or Altenburg; and it was only when answered in the negative, that he hastened to gain the Lindenau causeway.

Thus it is with this boasted man. Whenever we are obliged to follow French writers, and the mass of those who in all languages have more or less re-echoed their laudatory strains, we only find pictures of what the authors wish to be thought heroism of the highest order. But fortunately for the cause of truth, the painters have frequently been unskilful, and have attempted to represent greatness in a garb which it never wears. Unbiassed and trust-worthy individuals have also related traits and incidents often trivial in themselves, but well calculated, when brought together and placed in proper light, to furnish us with a fair view of his vastly overrated character, and lay bare the insignificance of the man, cleared from the false halo which party-zeal and the idolatry of followers have attempted to cast around him. And here we have a plain statement by an able and respectable individual, showing us "the man of bronze," "iron," "granite," as Napoleon has been termed, behaving, to say the least of it, like a mortal of very humble *caste* indeed. His conduct here is in full accordance with that skill which accepted a needless battle on the plains of Leipzig, and could offer only inactive resistance when engaged against multitudes certain to crush such opposition by the mere weight of superior numbers.

And Napoleon is safe: but thousands of his followers have yet to pay with their lives the incapacity of his leading. Carried along by the mass, the Emperor had no sooner passed the last bridge at Lindenau, than he ascended to the upper story of the mill where the best view of the scene was to be obtained. Here he dictated to a cabinet secretary an order appointing Marshal M'Donald to the command of the rear-guard, and directing him to defend at least the old city of Leipzig

for twenty-four hours, or, if that were impossible, to hold it at all events till nightfall. While the secretaries were copying and folding their despatch, the mover of the frightful scene, overpowered by the exertions and fatigues of the previous day, fell into a profound sleep, uninterrupted by the tumult of the passing columns, or by the roar of artillery booming over from the opposite banks of the river. He had thus rested for some time, when a tremendous explosion, rising far above the storm of battle, shook the air around; and Augereau and the King of Naples arriving in haste, entered the apartment, and awakened him with the tidings that the Elster bridge before the Randstadt gate had been blown up.

It was eleven o'clock, and the corps of Reynier, Lauriston, Poniatowsky, and M'Donald, were still on the right bank of the stream, engaged in desperate combat with the enemy, and doomed to almost certain destruction. The impatience of the allied troops had left the artillery but insufficient time to destroy the defences prepared by the French; the columns had advanced to the assault, and the soldiers of Bülow and Benningsen, beating down the stubborn resistance opposed to them, had carried the eastern suburbs, and penetrated to the broad esplanade that surrounds the city. The French fought in brave and gallant style, disputed the ground foot by foot and step by step, and resisted behind every obstacle. On the esplanade they had erected batteries that swept the open ground, and which had now to be carried at weapon's point. The combat was fierce and sanguinary. Blücher forced the northern suburb, the Austrians entered by the Peter's gate; and on both sides the assailants were arrested as much by the number of guns, waggons, coaches, carriages, jammed together, as by the vigorous defence of the enemy.

"The assault of Leipzig," says the author of the Recollections of the Liberation War, already quoted, "was far more sanguinary, for the number of troops engaged, than the previous battle had been. On both sides exasperation was at its height: the French had loop-holed villas and garden-walls, and maintained their ground with bitter resolution. In a large building, termed the Civic School, they fought from story to story, and from class to class, till the last defenders were actually thrown out of the upper windows, to perish by the bayonets of the enraged multitude below. By degrees the fury of battle degenerated into an absolute thirst of blood. The columns broke into swarms of skirmishers, that gathered round officers as chance directed, so that soldiers of all corps and nations fought at times under commanders whom they had never seen, could not even understand; and thus led, rushed to the attack of the nearest foes that could be discovered. A battalion of Napoleon's Young Guard, beset by a swarm of these skirmishers, took post in the Grimma cemetery, and there foiled all their efforts, and killed many of our officers. Perceiving, however, that nothing could be gained by remaining stationary, the French resolved to sally out: formed in close column, they issued in compact and soldier-like style through the gate, and easily broke the irregular host by which they were beset. At this moment, however, two companies of the second Prussian regiment advanced in good order along the Grimma Street, rallied the skirmishers, and forced the French to fall back into the cemetery. But they did not enter alone; pursuers and pursued now pressed in together; and the combatants once mixed, the butt-ends of the muskets soon completed the work of death: and though the French were not all slain, few escaped the scene of slaughter."

And now also the interior wall was carried. It has generally been asserted that the Baden troops entrusted with its defence, turned against their former allies in the hour of defeat, and fired upon the French. The assertion, like so many others brought forward by Napoleon's worshippers, is totally devoid of truth. The Baden troops were not on the ramparts, they were in the city, and fought bravely in the French cause to the very last.* By Blücher's orders, some light infantry had already forced their way into the gardens bordering the Elster, and were firing on the confused column flying along the causeway. But the French, undismayed by certain defeat, still maintained the fight; as if anxious to contrast by brilliant deeds of arms the gloominess of the fate by which they were crushed; to show, even in the last of their great fields, that fortune might forsake the brave, but could not subdue their valour. Forced back to the western extremity of the city and suburbs, the chaotic mass filled the western esplanade and all the avenues leading to the outer Randstadt gate, the last plank of hope, exposed almost defenceless to the storm of shot poured upon them by the assailants. At this moment sprung the mine beneath the bridge. The tremendous explosion, the shriek of wild despair that rose above the doomed multitude, as numbers were precipitated through the fatal chasm into the watery abyss below, told that resistance was vain, and that the fate of battle and of nations was decided. The remnants of the vanquished then seeing that hope had fled their banner, surrendered at discretion, and laid down the arms they had so bravely wielded.

It remains to be said, that before the assault commenced, a deputation of the magistrates waited on the

* Berlin Military Gazette, 1830. Spectateur Militaire, vol. vi.

Allied Sovereigns to solicit protection for the city, and to propose, on the part of the French commander, to withdraw the troops if an armistice were granted, and their unmolested retreat secured. As the safe retreat of the conquered would have deprived the conquerors of all the fruits of their hard-earned victory, of the best fruits indeed of the long and toilsome campaign, the proposal was rejected; but a promise was given, that every effort should be used to preserve the city from injury. And this was strictly adhered to: the artillery threw no shells during the attack; and both the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia addressed their troops as they advanced to the assault, and recommended the city to their care, desiring them to use their arms only against resisting foes. The soldiers paid noble obedience to these injunctions; and resistance had hardly ceased on the part of the French, when the most perfect security already existed in the town.

At one o'clock, amid the wildest tumult of joy, the Allied Sovereigns made their triumphal entry into Leipzig. From all quarters the multitude, frantic with delight to find themselves liberated from the yoke of foreign aggressors, flocked round the victors, and rent the air with enthusiastic greetings: the music of the martial bands swelled the cheers of the exulting citizens, while the ringing of bells, the roar of artillery, and the firing of musketry, still sounding from the banks of the Elster, raised a mingled chorus of joy and terror, such as best became the closing scene of that great and fearful drama.

The interior of the city presented an awful spectacle. Booths had been erected for the annual fair, the period of which was approaching; but instead of being furnished with the merchandise of all nations, they were now filled with bleeding and wounded French, who

had tried to shelter their last moments within these frail mansions. In all the streets and walks, heaps of dead, friends and foes, already stript to the skin, and presenting their ghastly gaping wounds to sight, lay piled along the walls. Opposite the Randstadt gate, the Elster and the *Mühlgraben* were almost choked with men and horses, who had been precipitated into the streams by the pressure of the multitude, or had perished in attempting to swim or ford the treacherous waters, and now projected in horrid groups above the surface in all the frightful attitudes which death bequeaths to those who grapple for life, even with the last remnants of parting breath. Every where was the image of destruction: broken carriages and ammunition-waggons, overturned guns, swords, cuirasses, knapsacks, broken muskets, cooking utensils, lay around in mixed confusion; shattered windows, and the marks of balls upon the houses, showed the fiery work which had been done. Streets and squares swarmed with Austrians, Prussians, Cossacks, and Baskiers; numbers of French mixed carelessly with the throng; no one seemed now to think these meagre and half-famished apparitions deserving even of notice.

The battle of Leipzig cost the vanquished 60,000 men in killed and wounded and prisoners: a loss enormous of itself, and yet far below what might have been inflicted on them, had the timid policy of Schwarzenberg allowed him to make a prompt and energetic use of the vast and unbroken forces at his disposal. Among the prisoners taken were two commanders of corps, Generals Reynier and Lauriston, besides twenty Generals of brigade and division: the captured trophies consisted of 325 pieces of artillery, 130,000 muskets, and 900 baggage and ammunition waggons. Marshal

M'Donald, the commander of the rear-guard, escaped by swimming his horse across the Elster. Prince Poniatowsky was not so fortunate. He had been wounded in the action; and when striving to gain the river, another ball struck him; it pierced the very decoration he wore on his breast,—and, carried on by his steed, he plunged into the stream, but sank beneath the water, from which he was only taken out a corpse. A gallant soldier, he was buried with the military honours due to his rank, and in a manner befitting the descendant of a long and illustrious line of kings and princes; but his worth and bravery, whatever they may have been, cannot justify the many historians who, in constantly striving to elevate whatever approached Napoleon to some ideal of perfection, have represented this aged soldier as a young and chivalrous hero, the hope and promise of oppressed nations. Prince Poniatowsky, instead of being the Apollo in lancer uniform, generally described by authors and depicted by painters and sculptors, was short and stout of person, and had Tartar features, as destitute of beauty as of expression.

It is usual for French writers, following the text of Napoleon's bulletins, to ascribe the heavy losses sustained at Leipzig to the accidental destruction of the bridge,—blown up, they assure us, long before the appointed time. Their story is this:—A Colonel Montfort, entrusted with the service, wishing for some farther instructions, left his post and went to Lindenau to consult Marshal Berthier, directing *a corporal of sappers*, who remained in charge of the mine, to light the train when the last of the French troops should have passed, —or only, as Pelet says, on the order of a general officer. The non-commissioned officer finding, however, that the Allies were already advancing along the meadows, and

firing on the causeway, thought the time for lighting the train had arrived, applied his match, and completed the work of destruction.

If we take this "poor device of the enemy" for granted, we must suppose, that in a well-disciplined army, an officer holding the rank of Colonel—above all, a Colonel of Engineers—will leave his post in front of the enemy, and retire a couple of miles for the purpose of personally consulting the chief of the Staff; and that in acting so extraordinary a part, he will entrust a duty on which the safety of the army is depending to a simple corporal of sappers! We must farther suppose, that Napoleon, who was so jealous of his military reputation that he never admitted having been guilty of the slightest fault or error, would overlook the misconduct of the Colonel and corporal; and instead of bringing them to trial, and to deserved punishment if found guilty, would quietly consent to bear the heavy blame of their misconduct. No one was ever brought to trial for this disaster: the order emanating from a confusion of ideas, and issued evidently by the Emperor himself, hardly admitted of being properly executed. The bridge in question is situated close under the walls of Leipzig, and could not fail, in the event of a prolonged contest, of being turned by the allied skirmishers, and placed completely within control of their fire; so that those charged with its destruction would have no alternative, when assailed, but to light the train, or abandon their post without executing the duty entrusted to them. The bridge of Lindenau, situated close under the French guns at the western extremity of the causeway, which might have been blown up at pleasure, was the one to have been mined. It has even been asserted that there was no Colonel Montfort of the Engineers present with the army.

The destruction of the bridge, however it may have happened, was besides a matter of very little consequence. Blücher's troops had already crossed into the adjoining meadows, and were firing on the causeway; from the south, swarms of Austrian light infantry were advancing against the same line; so that in a few minutes more the passage would have been completely blocked up. Had the bridge remained totally uninjured, it might have diminished by four or five hundred the number of captives left in the hands of the Allies, and enabled some fifty or sixty additional carriages to escape; trifles that could not in the slightest degree have altered the character of such a sweeping catastrophe.

Napoleon was sufficiently conscious, however, that the blame rested only with himself: for he sent one of his officers to the General commanding the Engineers, to make him understand that it was necessary in great emergencies to find a scape-goat—"*bouc-emissair*,"—who could be held up to the public as the cause of misfortune. On this occasion the Emperor wished the blame to fall on the chief of the Staff of the Engineers, who was to be well rewarded for his silence. The gallant soldier rejected the offer with scorn; and the unworthy sovereign who attempted to bribe one of his own officers into loading himself with dishonour, had the mortification to find his proposal treated with the contempt it deserved.

The Allies also had suffered severely in this bloody contest. No less than 45,000 men, including 21 General and 1800 other officers, had been killed or wounded in the battle.* But though it was a heavy sacrifice of blood, a terrible price paid for conquest, the victory was cheaply

* 22,000 Russians, 15,000 Prussians, 8000 Austrians, 300 Swedes!

purchased when its mighty results are considered: for it not only broke the bands that enthralled so many brave and enlightened nations, but swept from the earth a system of fraud, tyranny, violence, and corruption, such as no previous age had ever known, and one that was tending rapidly to deteriorate the moral worth of man, extinguish all the better and nobler qualities of the heart, and substitute blind and brutal military obedience for every other virtue held sacred below.

CHAPTER VII.

RETREAT OF THE FRENCH, AND FALL OF THE "GREAT EMPIRE:" FATE OF THE FORTRESSES, AND REMARKS ON THE CAMPAIGN OF 1813. DECLARATION OF FRANKFORT AND PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS.

THE overwhelming losses sustained at Leipzig, now left the vanquished no alternative but a hasty retreat across the Rhine, and even this could only be effected by great exertion and the aid of Fortune. Owing to the cautious system of strategy followed by Prince Schwarzenberg, as well as to the difficulty of moving the large and unwieldy army he commanded, this aid might to some extent be calculated upon; but the amount of favour lavished by the fickle goddess on the retiring French, very far exceeded what their most sanguine friends could have anticipated.

Blücher, already convinced on the evening of the 18th that Napoleon was preparing to retreat, despatched Yorck's corps across the Elster to Halle, that it might be ready to fall in upon the right flank of the retiring enemy. At the same time when he notified this movement to Prince Schwarzenberg, he advised him to send the Russian and Prussian reserves to reinforce General Giulay at Pegau, with orders for this combined force of nearly 50,000 men, to follow the chord of the arch round

which the French would have to march, and intercept their retreat in some of the strong passes between the Saale and the Unstrut; or fall in upon their left flank as circumstances might direct. But this measure was of too decided a character for the cautious Generalissimo: he expected that Napoleon would fight another battle on the 19th in front of Leipzig; and thus assembled the whole of his 250,000 men round an unfortified city, containing only the rear-guard of a vanquished enemy. Nor was this all: for after the retreat had fairly commenced, he still believed the foe would hazard a battle near Erfurt, and under this impression kept his forces closely together: so that the French were only followed in their march, rarely pressed, and never intercepted and placed between two fires, as they very easily might have been.

The great results certain to spring from the victory gained, may also have tended to check the vigour of the pursuit. The liberation of Germany was effected; and it is possible that in the first moment of success, no advantages beyond those certain to attend such an event were anticipated in any quarter; and Napoleon reaped necessarily the full benefit of these timid views and half measures.

On the evening of the 19th he assembled the remnants of his army round Markranstadt; but little rest was here allowed to the vanquished; and at three o'clock on the following morning the march was already resumed. In the cold grey dawn of rising day, the Emperor was distinguished in the midst of his staff, traversing the plain of Lützen, so lately the scene of his triumph. He was, we are told, dark, silent, and gloomy; he appeared, say his admirers, unshaken even by the blows of fate; and historians, dazzled by his imperial fortunes, forgetting

that this boasted man was coarse, violent, and irritable in prosperity, have actually mistaken this sullen gloom—the mere helpless exhaustion of a little mind—for the calmness of a great one supporting with stern composure the heaviest pressure of adversity. The soldiers judged better: no cheers of *Vive l'Empereur* now greeted his passage; but those who had witnessed the retreat from Moscow called out as he passed along, "There goes the man, exactly as he returned from Russia!"

At Weisenfels, Bertrand received the Emperor; and seeing the frightful disorder in which the columns arrived, implored him to leave the troops and hasten on to Mayence, and thus relieve France and the army itself from all apprehension for his personal safety. Napoleon, however, rejected the advice, declaring aloud that he would accompany the troops who were to assemble at Erfurt.

With the exception of two thousand prisoners taken by Blücher's cavalry in the plain of Lützen, the Saale was passed in safety: and now the Unstrut had to be gained. At Frieberg, on the road to Erfurt, this stream runs between lofty mountains which, owing to the narrow, steep, and broken roads, are as difficult to descend on one side as to ascend on the other. Here the French had to pass on the 22d; and the sound of artillery, rolling over from the direction of Kosen, already proclaimed that their left flank was in danger, and that speed was necessary: and such was the confusion occasioned by the pressure of infantry, cavalry, baggage, and artillery, that Napoleon had to leave his carriage a mile before he reached the town, and make his way on foot through the crowd. Scarcely had he reached the bank of safety, when the advanced guard of Yorck's corps arriving from Halle, appeared on the opposite heights,

and immediately opened a fire on the masses pressing through the defile. On a small scale, the frightful spectacle of the Beresina was again repeated on the banks of the Unstrut; but French guns mounted on the right and more commanding side of the river, and the arrival of Marshal Oudinot with two divisions of the Young Guard, forming the rear-guard of the army, kept the Prussians in check till darkness cast her protecting veil over the fugitives, who escaped with the loss of 1200 prisoners, 18 guns, and a quantity of baggage.

Napoleon remained two days at Erfurt, occupied principally with the labours of the cabinet; fifteen days' despatches having accumulated here during the late operations, so completely had the allied light troops interrupted all communication between France and the army. The most urgent wants of the soldiers having also been supplied from the magazines of the fortress, something like discipline was again restored. It was, indeed, greatly needed: for on the march the conduct of the troops had been disgraceful. Fierce and insubordinate, they had committed every species of excess,—the Old Guard setting an example of misconduct which others had too readily followed. Nor was the appearance of the troops better than their conduct had been. "Few regiments," says Odeleben, who was an eye-witness, "maintained the slightest order in passing through Erfurt; and it was afflicting to see the state of wretchedness to which these famished and rag-covered men were reduced. They fell with ravenous avidity on the provisions served out; and as the clothing and biscuit were not sufficient to supply all the applicants, the pushing, jostling, tearing, and quarrelling, had no end." Napoleon, exasperated by the situation to which he had himself reduced the army, denounced his own soldiers "as a set of scoundrels, going

to the devil." "At this rate," he said, "I shall lose eighty thousand men before I get to the Rhine." In confirmation of what we have stated above, we may again observe, that these are not the terms in which a man of calm, composed, and dignified mind, would speak of soldiers who had fought so bravely and supported so many hardships in his cause, and who had been reduced to their present state of demoralization by that want of ordinary foresight and capacity which sent mighty armies to the field, forgetful that even soldiers require food and clothing.

All the foreign troops had now forsaken the French ranks; eight regiments of Polish infantry had gone over to the Allies on the evening after the battle of Leipzig; but the morning states of the army still gave a hundred thousand men present with their colours. Other defections were, however, preparing. Murat, when insulted by Napoleon after the Russian campaign, had entered into some secret negotiations with Austria, which he broke off when called upon to join the army before the battle of Dresden. These were now renewed; and on the 22d the Austrian General, Count Mier, had a private interview with him at the camp of Altendorf, and there guaranteed his kingdom to him on the part of the Allies. Such at least is Norvin's statement; and certain it is that two days afterwards, Murat, on pretence of raising troops for the defence of Naples, took leave of his brother-in-law; and Napoleon, as if under some presentiment, fatally realized for both, that they were to meet no more, embraced his old companion in arms repeatedly at parting.

The great victory gained, the Allies divided their army. The Crown Prince of Sweden, finding himself in a false position at Leipzig, where every captive and

every wounded Frenchman seemed to reproach him with his conduct, and not perhaps very well received by the Emperor of Austria, hastened to the north to carry his plans against Denmark into execution: he was supported by the troops of Benningsen. General Klenau, with an Austrian corps, was sent to blockade Dresden, in which St Cyr with his 35,000 men was now left to his fate. At the head of 170,000 men, the remains of the Bohemian and Silesian armies, Schwarzenberg followed slowly in pursuit of the vanquished enemy.

Blücher having turned Erfurt in the direction of Eisenach, Napoleon, on the 25th, left that fortress, taking his road by Gotha and Fulda towards the Rhine. "Nothing could be more revolting," says General Müffling, "than to follow in the footsteps of the French army. The road was strewed with the carcases of horses, with dead and dying soldiers, and even the prisoners brought in had death stamped upon their brows. Disgust prevented the men from sleeping on the straw that might have been used by this diseased and fevered host, which not only devoured the provisions of the country through which it passed, but infected the very inhabitants also."

At Fulda, Blücher, who had for some days led the advance and fought several actions with the French rear-guard, was ordered to strike to the right, take the direction of Wetzlar, and leave the main road open to the Grand Army: an order highly injurious perhaps to the cause, at a moment when a more energetic pursuit might have led to the most important results.

By the treaty of Reid, signed on the 8th October, Bavaria had joined the Allies; and the Austrian and Bavarian armies, which had hitherto confronted each other on the banks of the Inn, having thus become disposable, were immediately united under the command

of Marshal Wrede, and directed against the common enemy. Amounting to 55,000 men, they might, no doubt, have taken up a position or adopted a line of action which must have proved highly dangerous to Napoleon. The French army were already pursued by vastly superior forces'; and surrounded on all sides by swarms of Cossacks and light troops that not only harassed the rear, but disputed every difficult piece of ground with the advanced guard; they could be struck at on all points with comparative impunity, but could only be arrested in front by adequate numbers, or by strong and well occupied positions. Marshal Wrede, ill informed perhaps, acted on different views, and adopted measures which have incurred the blame of all military critics who have written on the campaign. He first lost time in bombarding Würtzburg, and having captured the town, left three battalions to watch the castle, though neither city nor fortress could be of the slightest importance, when the stakes then contended for were considered. The capture of Würtzburg having cost time, the occupation of Frankfort was to cost men; and 10,000 were accordingly detached to take possession of an open city incapable of exercising any influence on the result of the operations. With the rest of his troops, 40,000 in number, he took post on the Kinzig, near Hanau, and thus completely interposed between France and the French army.

On the 28th and the 29th, he gained considerable advantage over the advanced guard of the retiring enemy, and captured about 4000 prisoners; but as he occupied no position of strength, and stood on perfectly accessible ground, his force was not equal to withstand the shock of Napoleon's whole army. Aware of the danger which beset him, the Emperor, disregarding the losses of men

and *materiel* as much as the sufferings of the troops, had hastened his march, and having gained forty miles on the main body of the pursuers, could now direct all his efforts against the adversaries that attempted to bar his passage. He attacked and defeated Wrede on the 30th, and might have inflicted a heavy loss on the Austro-Bavarian army, had not his object been to secure his retreat, rather than to gain fruitless victories. The passage was no sooner forced than he pushed on to Frankfort, which had been evacuated at his approach leaving Marmont, Mortier, and Bertrand, again to engage Wrede on the following day. The action was therefore renewed on the 31st, and continued for some time with great sharpness. Marshal Wrede, wishing perhaps to atone by the gallantry of the soldier for the errors of the commander, led his troops sword-in-hand to the charge. In assaulting the bridge of Hanau, he was severely wounded and obliged to be carried from the field; and the Austrian General, Fresnel, the next in command, seeing that the real object of the battle was no longer attainable, broke off the combat, and left a free passage to the retiring enemy.

On the 2d of November, Napoleon crossed the Rhine, followed by about 70,000 men, all that remained of the splendid army of 400,000 gallant soldiers who had, three months before, stood arrayed beneath his banner. And even this poor remnant of the mighty host was to be still further diminished. The troops had brought an infectious fever, the result of toil, want, and suffering, along with them; and were no sooner distributed in quarters on the left bank of the river, than the pestilence gathering strength from the reduced condition of the soldiers, extended its ravages with foul and hideous rapidity. The shaft of death flew fast along the banks of the

Rhine, faster far than flew the vengeful arrows of Latona's son, when directed against the Argive warriors assembled by "Helle's sounding wave;" nor ceased the poisoned shower, till half the fugitive host had fallen victims to this fatal enemy, more frightful than any encountered in the fair fields of war.

The Emperor himself, the vanquished leader of these broken bands, remained for a week at Mayence, to learn the temper of Paris, and prepare the minds of the people for a due reception of their humbled sovereign. He reached the capital on the 10th, and took up his abode at St Cloud, beyond the walls, as if mistrustful of the volatile temper of "his good city."

Loud, long, and enthusiastic, were the shouts of joy and triumph that burst from the Austrian and Prussian ranks, when the soldiers beheld the Rhine, the time-honoured stream of Germany, and associated in the minds of her people with so many deeds of chivalry and romance. The vine-covered hills, celebrated in countless songs; the moss-grown towers and mountain castles, filling legends and traditions with their fortunes; the noble and ancient cities, once the seats of learning, and the first cradles of civil liberty, the pride of old Princely and Imperial Germany, lay full in view, presenting the noblest reward that victory had ever offered to the brave: the soldiers of Germany arriving in arms on the bank of the majestic stream, saw that their fatherland was free, and its soil no longer polluted by the legions of tyranny and foreign oppression.

And now was seen the worthlessness of the foundation on which Napoleon had raised his "Grand Empire:" a hundred battles had been fought to build the edifice, and a single defeat struck it to the ground. No sooner was the result of the battle of Leipzig known, than the

Illyrian and Dalmatian provinces rose in arms and expelled the French, who were obliged to retire beyond the Adige; the public functionaries, the agents of the sanguinary conscription and tyrannical excise, only escaping death by the speed of their flight. The Tyrol, Brunswick, and Hanover, returned with enthusiasm to the allegiance of their legitimate rulers; and from the very battle-field, the Prince of Hesse set out as an ordinary traveller, to overthrow one of Napoleon's thrones, and re-occupy his father's dominions. Plundered and long-oppressed Holland raised the cry of "*Orange Boven,*" "Up with Orange;" dismissed the French governor, and obliged the troops to seek shelter within the walls of the fortresses. Insurrections broke out in Italy; the French prefects were forced to fly in disguise; and Murat having vainly urged his brother-in-law to make peace, and not been honoured even with an answer to his letters, forsook the cause of France, and joined the Allies. Nor was it to be expected that the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine would be more faithful to Napoleon than the members of his own family; and no sooner had the Allied Monarchs established themselves at Frankfort, than the Sovereigns of Baden, Würtemberg, and of all the minor states, sent in their submission, with tenders of their services to the great cause of European freedom and independence. Not one of the many nations over which Napoleon had so long held sway raised voice or arms in his favour: from the Rhine to the Vistula, from the Northern Ocean to the Adriatic, his name and rule were the hatred of millions, who now hailed his fall as a sign of mercy conferred by Providence on a suffering world.

In whatever direction the vanquished Emperor turned his eyes, he now beheld the political horizon darkening

around him. In the north, Bernadotte having pressed the Danes back into Holstein, forced them to sign the treaty of Lubeck, by which they resigned Norway to Sweden, and engaged to reinforce the Allied Army with 10,000 men.

In the south, where a single campaign had liberated Spain, the aspect of affairs was still more threatening. The Duke of Wellington, following up the success of Vittoria, had invested Pampeluna and St Sebastian ; and in a succession of sanguinary actions fought amidst the rocks of the Pyrenees, had defeated all Marshal Soult's efforts to relieve these fortresses. Pampeluna capitulated, and St Sebastian was taken after one of the most memorable assaults recorded in military history. The soldiers, unable to ascend the impracticable breach, remained at its foot exposed, in open day, to all the fire of the fortress, till the shot of their own guns, striking only a few feet above their heads, opened a passage through which these dauntless men forced their way against the bravest and most stubborn resistance. The history of no people can yet furnish an action of noble soldiership capable of being placed by the side of the capture of St Sebastian; and as it has never been equalled, we may well express the belief that it will never be surpassed. The fortresses having fallen, and a firm basis of operation been established, the Duke of Wellington crossed the Bidassoa on the 7th October, and carried the French entrenchments after a stout and well maintained action: and the army of England, which foreign and domestic foes had so long tried to weaken by derision, had so long represented as incapable of contending against the victorious legions of France, was thus the first to plant its unconquered banners on that soil which national vanity had declared to be sacred and inviolate.

As it was impossible for Napoleon, and the writers who

endeavour to uphold his military infallibility, to ascribe the disasters of 1813 to the severity of hostile elements, it became necessary to devise other causes which, lying beyond his control, should account for the failure of the many "splendid conceptions" formed by the Emperor for the destruction of his enemies. That the defection of the Saxons, and the destruction of the bridge of Leipzig, are brought prominently forward in this list of "fatalities," need not be mentioned; but as they have already been disposed of, and we hope in a satisfactory manner, we shall only speak here of the ungenerous accusations so constantly advanced, without proof, against his subordinates.

According to Napoleon's statement, the want of zeal on the part of the marshals, who were tired of the war, and wished to return to their luxurious palaces at Paris; their want of talent also, in not compensating by ability and skilful manœuvres for the inferiority of their numbers, occasioned, with inattention and neglect of orders, all the disasters that befell his arms. To this it may be answered, that a man of great genius and insight into character, possessing absolute power in his empire and army, would not have employed marshals and generals of exhausted zeal, when he must have had so many able, ardent, and aspiring officers under his command. That some of the marshals at the head of corps did not evince any great ability, is very possible; but even Napoleon himself, fighting with equal numbers at Wachau, enacted no especial wonder against Schwarzenberg; and the time is long past when such men as Ney, Oudinot, and M'Donald, however brave and meritorious, can be compared to the adversaries against whom they had to contend. It is not likely that any one could rise to the rank of marshal in Napoleon's army, without some share of merit; but it is very possible to

possess both merit and experience, and be yet far inferior to such men as Blücher, Kleist, Bülow, and Borstel, men of high military genius, animated by the ardent patriotic zeal for which the German soldiers of the period were so nobly distinguished.

That in the large French armies which took the field in 1813, and operated on the vast extent of country which became the theatre of war, numerous errors would be committed, need not be doubted. But the Allies were, from the same causes, even more liable to error. Their armies were more numerous than the French, and composed in a manner that left far too many openings for "untoward" mistakes; and, acting on the exterior circumference, they were at a greater distance from each other, and occupied a larger extent of country. They committed many grave faults in consequence, though the enemy had, fortunately, not the skill to profit by them.

Marshal Oudinot may have manœuvred as badly at Gross-Beeren as Ney is accused of having done at Dennewitz, and M'Donald on the Katzbach; but the errors committed by the French commanders on these occasions were not of weight to counteract those of which their enemies were guilty: for if some of the French divisions were late in the two first named battles, half of the Allied Army never came into action; the Crown Prince of Sweden having, as already shown, kept completely aloof on both days. The left wing of the French may have been indifferently led at the Katzbach; but the left wing of Blücher's army, composed of Langeron's corps, more than 30,000 strong, retired altogether from the field, and obliged General Yorck to throw back one of the brigades of the centre, to prevent its being turned. Napoleon accused Vandamme of having occasioned the loss of his corps by advancing, without orders, towards

Töplitz. We know the accusation to be false; but if true, it would only have been fault for fault; because it was Barclay de Tolly's disobedience of orders which left the road to Töplitz open, and compromised the safety of the army. Napoleon neglected, however, to avail himself of this favourable opportunity for striking a decisive blow: the Allies did better; seeing the mistake he had committed, they hastened to remedy their own by destroying the unsupported corps sent against them.

It was the same at Leipzig, where both parties were guilty of extraordinary errors. Napoleon, intending to fall upon the Bohemian army on the morning of the 16th, ordered Marshal Ney, "*if not threatened with an attack himself,*" to send the 6th corps—Marmont's—to Lieberwolkowitz, in time to aid the main attack on Schwarzenberg; and as the corps was not sent, he and his followers have accused the Marshal of disobedience of orders, and with having prevented the Emperor from achieving a great victory. But how stands the case? When this order arrived at Radefeld—about ten in the morning—the leading columns of the Silesian army were already seen in full march against the position Marshal Ney occupied: he, therefore, retained the corps agreeably to the conditional order, and acquainted the Emperor, "that he was about to be attacked by the whole of Blücher's army." Napoleon, however, would hear nothing of this; and though ten miles distant, insisted on knowing better than the Marshal, who from the steeple of Radefeld had seen the advance of the Prussians. He declared that the whole of the Silesian army was on the left bank of the Elster, and that Ney could have only a few light troops in his front: and reiterated the command, directing two divisions to march on Lieberwolkowitz. An order so positive was not to be disobeyed, and

though the combat was already engaged with Blücher's troops, two divisions were despatched to reinforce the Emperor. Had they remained with Marshal Ney these two divisions might have averted the defeat of Mökern; but they were too late to take any share in the combat of Wachau, and did not fire a single shot in the action: though,

> "Full need was there, that every string
> That day should clear and sharply ring."

But if the errors thus committed by Napoleon were of benefit to the Allies, they failed not to repay the obligation in similar coin. Bernadotte took, as before, no share in the battle of the 16th, and left Blücher to his own resources. Langeron, following up the success against the few troops opposed to him near Lindenthal, struck too far to the left, and was not present at Mökern. And this error, grave enough in itself, was yet trifling in its results, compared to another of which he was guilty. On the 15th, Blücher had ordered the division of General St Priest, belonging to Langeron's corps, to cross the Elster at Merseburg, proclaim itself the advanced-guard of the Silesian army, and aid General Giulay in the attack on Lindenau,—a movement which would in all probability have enabled the Austrian General to retain that important post, and would thus have produced the most incalculable results. Count Langeron, however, expecting to be seriously engaged on the 16th, recalled St Priest's division early in the morning, without even informing Blücher of what he had done. The General countermarched his troops on the order of his immediate superior, but was much too late to take any share in the action; so that his division was as completely lost to the Allies as the divisions of Souhan were to the French. It

was evidently, however, the march of St Priest's division which deceived Napoleon into the belief that the whole of the Silesian army was on the left bank of the Elster, and induced him to recall the troops of Marshal Ney, and to weaken that commander at the very moment when he was about to be attacked. The French writers who ascribe the disasters of Napoleon to the disobedience, want of skill and zeal of his subordinates, should not forget how much he stands indebted to the greater and more numerous faults committed by his adversaries; faults which alone prevented him from being completely crushed at a much earlier period of the campaign.

Some writers, Rogniat among the number, have blamed the Emperor for persisting to hold the line of the Elbe during the Autumn campaign of which we have been speaking. If we judge only from the result, the reproach must be received as a just one; but we deem it too generally stated to be taken into fair account. The critics who tell us that Napoleon should have abandoned the line of the Elbe, must mean to say—what they do not say—that he should have abandoned Germany and retired beyond the Rhine; for there was no line of ground possessing equal advantages for defence, that could be compared to those which the Elbe and its fortresses presented. As long as it was intended to battle for the supremacy of Germany, consequently of Europe, so long was the line of the Elbe indispensable. A retreat beyond the Rhine amounted, in fact, to a declaration that the throne of France was alone to be contended for: such a retreat was a willing sacrifice of more than had been demanded by the Congress of Prague, and was completely at variance, therefore, with the views of political supremacy which he entertained. Whether, in the then posture of affairs, and after his diminished influence, he could still

have maintained himself in France by such a concentration of his forces, is a question which it would now be idle to speculate upon. The great disadvantage of Napoleon's position on the Elbe resulted from his having made the unfortified city of Dresden, placed close under the guns of the Bohemian army, the pivot of his operations and the main depôt of his stores. By this measure he tied himself completely down to the Saxon capital; for in whatever direction he might march, his adversaries could always tell the day and hour when he would be forced to return to its defence. It was placing in their hands the very clock by which his movements were regulated—a gift by which they profited not a little. This great error on the part of the Emperor is the more striking, as it was seen by all the allied officers, and might have been remedied by merely removing the depôt to Torgau, a fortress of strength only a few miles farther down the river, and perfectly secure from all sudden attacks.

Nothing shows more clearly the total want of plan and foresight displayed by Napoleon in the conduct of the Autumn campaign of 1813, than the fact of his having left to their fate 150,000 men locked up in the German and Polish fortresses. Not the least effort was made to save this numerous and veteran army; not a single letter was sent to any one of the commanders, giving them orders, informing them of the situation of affairs, or desiring them to do the best they could under circumstances in which they were placed. At every page of modern history, we see what is called "the calm and gigantic mind of Napoleon" spoken of in the highest terms of admiration which the writers can command, and yet we here find this pretended man of genius unable, in the hour of adversity, to collect sufficient com-

posure to bestow a thought on a hundred and fifty thousand brave and tried soldiers! It is a willing delusion to suppose genius and talent consistent with such conduct.

The following was the strength of the garrisons when they surrendered, or marched out on their return to France after the peace:—Danzig, 15,000 men; Modelin, 3000; Zamosc, 4000; Stettin, 4000; Dresden, 35,000; Torgau, 10,000; Custrin, 2500; Glogau, 3000; Wittenberg, 1500; *Magdeburg*, 18,000; *Hamburg*, 15,000; *Erfurt*, 2000; Castle of *Marienburg*, 1500:—making a total of 118,000 men still remaining when they marched out. At the time of the battle of Leipzig, they were of course far more numerous: for in Torgau alone, fifteen thousand men had perished before the surrender of the fortress. The garrisons of the towns printed in italics held out till the capture of Paris; Wittenberg was taken by assault, the others surrendered on capitulation; some after having experienced sufferings which make humanity shudder.

Baron Fain, conscious perhaps that the total neglect of these numerous garrisons would be made a reproach to his Sovereign, tells us, indeed, that he sent orders from Erfurt, directing the commanders to unite the troops in mass, and force their way into France. According to the Baron, Napoleon felt confident that Davoust and St Cyr would obtain information and act accordingly; "if they only leave their walls and combine their measures," said the Emperor, "they are perfectly safe: eighty thousand French make their way through every obstacle." Not a single one of the despatches here mentioned by Baron Fain ever reached its destination; and what seems still more extraordinary, there is no appearance of a single one having been intercepted. It is only in Fain's book that we find any mention of these orders;

and Pelet, who gives so many important documents relative to the campaign, who never omits one that can tell in favour of the Emperor, says not a word about them. But supposing such orders to have been issued, what prospect was there that, sent from Erfurt, they could ever reach their destination,—pass not only through the centre of Blücher's army, but through hostile districts, and steal through the corps investing the fortresses? If they had been received, how could commanders of fortresses situated at two hundred miles from each other, and separated by hostile troops and hostile countries, "*combine their operations,*" certain of being assailed at all points by the investing troops the moment they left the protection of their ramparts? Whether at any period of the campaign the garrisons of the Oder and the Vistula could have been saved is uncertain, and very improbable indeed; but it is palpably clear that the troops stationed in the Elbe fortresses might have been withdrawn even to the last: for the communication with Torgau and Dresden was still perfectly open on the 17th, when Reynier's corps joined the army; and judicious orders sent even on that day, would have given the commanders time to get so far forward with their movement of concentration along the right bank of the Elbe, that their retreat could hardly have been prevented. But to send orders from Erfurt after the rout of Leipzig was, even if they had been sent, to give them to the winds.

The sufferings sustained by the French army during the campaign were so severe, the troops were so exasperated by defeat and privations, that it was not unusual during the retreat to hear the most violent imprecations uttered against Napoleon, to whom the terms "tyrant" and "butcher" were most liberally applied. Nor need we

wonder at this, when the distressing situation of the fugitives is considered. Sprengel, an eye-witness, thus speaks of the frightful scenes the march presented:—

"The prisoners taken on the previous day had been collected in a village that lay in our front, and were now conducted to the rear. And as we were not at the head of the column, we already heard from a distance the screams and lamentations of the approaching troop. But when they drew near, I was literally obliged to avert my head to avoid seeing the height of human misery, displayed in a thousand different shapes, by so many young men and boys dragging their naked and bleeding feet through the cold mud, as they marched past us. In straggling along, they raised their withered hands and skeleton arms in supplicating attitudes, imploring relief in voices already marked by the sound of death. Despair was impressed on every countenance; and I did not behold one whose features bore signs of resignation. All seemed to feel that the cause in which they suffered was not of a nature to dignify misfortune, and give, as a noble cause would, a noble and respect-commanding expression to the very depth of human misery.

"We threw all the provisions we had to these unhappy beings, and thus occasioned quarrels and battles among them, that often ended in actual bloodshed. The road from Hanau to Mayence was literally strewn with famished men and horses; and our very chargers snorted and started back from the naked and half living corses that lay around. Every where we seemed to behold a battle-field; and yet we only saw the harvest-field in which fatigue and famine had wielded the scythe of death. I had seen before, and have since beheld many a corse-covered field of war: at Culm we were for several days encamped where the unburied slain were decaying around

us; and yet these pictures have faded gradually from my mind; but the frightful exhibitions witnessed between Gellershausen and the banks of the Rhine, seem to have impressed themselves in ever vivid horror on my mental vision."

In all ranks a very hostile feeling appears at this time to have been entertained against the Emperor; even Thibaudeau admits that officers of rank had conspired against him; and persons have even asserted that it was in contemplation to make him "disappear as Romulus disappeared:" and though it would probably be difficult to show that any project of this kind was actually formed, the mere circumstance of its having been mentioned, spoken of, and repeated,—and even Pelet alludes to it, —shows the extent of hostile feeling that existed against him even in his own army. His popularity with the soldiers was entirely dependant on success—on the "spoil he got and gave," and bore no resemblance to the attachment entertained for the unfortunate but gallant, high, and noble-minded Charles XII., who, forsaken by fortune, was respected in adversity. He, too, was defeated;

> "But not a voice was heard t' upbraid
> Ambition in its humbled hour,
> When truth has nought to dread from power."

On arriving at Frankfort, the Allied Sovereigns issued a declaration well calculated to make a strong impression on the people of France. They announced their belief that it was for the interest of Europe that France should continue great and powerful, and expressed their willingness to concede to her a greater extent of territory than the Bourbon Kings had possessed—the boundary of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine. Their sole object in invading France was to put an end to the

authority Napoleon had usurped over other countries. They disclaimed all intention to interfere with the internal government of the country: the hostility of Europe was directed not against France, but against Napoleon, and even then not against his person, but his system.

Terms to this effect were also offered to Napoleon himself through M. de St Agnan, French Minister at the Court of Weimar, who had accidentally fallen into the hands of the Allies. The note of the propositions which he took down in writing, in presence of the Allied Ministers, including Lord Aberdeen, was as clear and distinct as possible; but the answer sent by Napoleon was exactly the reverse. The Emperor expressed great willingness to negotiate, recommended the city of Manheim as the proper place for assembling the Congress, dilated on the measures of police to be adopted on the occasion, but said not one word in acceptation of preliminaries. The address of the Senate on granting the number of conscripts demanded still spoke of Holland and Piedmont as portions of the inviolate empire; and the appearance in the *Moniteur* of this haughty proclamation, told plainly the sense it was intended to convey to the Allied powers. Napoleon's incorrigible presumption was still more strongly evinced in a proposal made to Prince Schwarzenberg, at a meeting of the Allied commanders purposely assembled at Hochheim, to receive, as it was stated, some important communication, and at which a French General calmly offered, on the part of the Emperor, to evacuate the Vistula fortresses, provided the garrisons were allowed to return to France!

The correspondence continued, however; but before the Congress was assembled, the Allies had crossed the Rhine. The spell which had arrested their steps on the frontier of France—the evident dread of invading the

"sacred territory," which had so long delayed their progress—was broken, and their demands rose in proportion to the success of their arms. And tottering diplomacy, gaining firmness from the presence of gallant and victorious myriads, followed, with some boldness, in the footsteps of strategy.

Printed Works that have served as authority in the composition of the present Book.

THIBAUDEAU, HISTOIRE DE FRANCE ET DE NAPOLEON, &c.

CAPEFIGUE, L'EUROPE PENDANT LE CONSULAT ET L'EMPIRE DE NAPOLEON.

Is good authority on some of the events comprised within the period of the present Book, the author having derived his information from Prince Metternich.

BARON FAIN, MANUSCRIPT DE 1813.

The Baron was Secretary of the Cabinet under Napoleon, and had good access to information. This work, though received by most writers as a sure and authentic source of history, cannot be implicitly relied upon, as shown in the passages relative to the battle of Culm, and the Emperor's stay at Düben.

NORVINS, PORTFEUILLE DE 1813.

This author had also good access to information, and the official documents he communicates are often valuable; but as a writer, he is little more than a special pleader in favour of the Emperor. The same may be said of his Life of Napoleon.

MARSHAL GOUVION ST CYR, MEMOIRES POUR SERVIR A L'HISTOIRE MILITAIRE DU CONSULAT ET DE L'EMPIRE.

A very valuable contribution to the history of Napoleon during this campaign.

VAUDONCOURT, HISTOIRE DE LA GUERRE SOUTENU PAR LES FRANCAIS EN ALLEMAGNE EN 1813.

Properly speaking, the only French history of the campaign; but written in too exclusively a French spirit.

JOMINI, VIE POLITIQUE ET MILITAIRE DE NAPOLEON.

A work very far below the reputation of the author.

LE SPECTATEUR MILITAIRE.

I. II. contains Pelet's Principales Operations de la Campagne de 1813.

III. contains General Bordesoult's account of the cavalry charge at the battle of Leipzig.

IV. disproves the unjust charges brought against the Baden troops at Leipzig.

GERMAN WORKS.

MEYNERT, THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FRANCIS I. OF AUSTRIA.

PLOTHO, HISTORY OF THE WAR IN GERMANY.

Valuable only on account of the official documents it contains.

BARON ODELEBEN, NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813.

The author, a Saxon officer, was attached to the French head-quarters during the campaign; and his work, translated into most European languages, is highly interesting.

C. *v.* W., (GENERAL MUFFLING,) CAMPAIGNS OF THE SILESIAN ARMY IN 1813 AND 1814.

The author held a high appointment on the staff of Marshal Blücher, and his work is deservedly esteemed.

BADE, NAPOLEON IN 1813.

The author served in one of the Prussian corps, under the command of the Crown Prince of Sweden. This work, which

is both military and political, is the ablest, perhaps, yet written on the period of which it treats.

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE, THE LIFE OF BLÜCHER.

An admirable biography.

MICHAILOFSKY, DANILEFSKY MEMORABILIA (*Deuskwürdigkeiten*) OF THE WAR OF 1813.

Judged of by the German translation, we should say that the author is anxious to give all the honours of the war to the Emperor Alexander and the Russians.

ZANDER, HISTORY OF THE WAR ON THE LOWER ELBE.

A clever work.

SAXONY AND ITS WARRIORS IN 1812-1813.

Formerly mentioned.

HASSEL, LEIPZIG DURING THE DAYS OF TERROR IN OCTOBER 1813.

AUSTRIAN MILITARY JOURNAL, 1836-1840.

BERLIN JOURNAL OF MILITARY SCIENCE AND HISTORY, 1826, 1830, 1834.

BERLIN MILITARY GAZETTE, 1830-1832, 1837-1839.

ENGLISH WORKS.

ALISON'S HISTORY OF EUROPE, &c. &c.

Always admirable; and may be looked upon as an authentic source of history respecting some of the events of the period comprised in this Book, the author having derived his information from the late Lord Cathcart, who, as British Ambassador, accompanied the Emperor Alexander. The Marquis of Londonderry's merely popular narrative also derives some value from the noble author's having been present in the field, and filled a diplomatic mission besides.

BOOK THIRD.

THE ABDICATION.

" IS IT SOME YET IMPERIAL HOPE,
THAT WITH SUCH FATE CAN CALMLY COPE?
OR DREAD OF DEATH ALONE?
TO DIE A PRINCE—OR LIVE A SLAVE,
THY CHOICE IS MOST IGNOBLY BRAVE."—BYRON.

BOOK THIRD.

THE ABDICATION.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON AT PARIS: PUBLIC OPINION AND STATE OF PARTIES: MILITARY PREPARATIONS: LIBERATION OF THE POPE AND OF THE SPANISH PRINCES: REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, AND NAPOLEON'S SPEECH TO THE MEMBERS. THE ALLIES INVADE FRANCE: DIVISIONS IN THEIR CAMP: COMBAT OF BRIENNE: BATTLE OF LA ROTHIERE: NAPOLEON'S EXPEDITION TO THE MARNE: CONGRESS OF CHATILLION: INSTRUCTIONS TO CAULAINCOURT.

THE wound which the events of the year 1812 had inflicted on the power of Napoleon, was greatly deepened by the fatal results of the Saxon campaign; and on his arrival at Paris, he already found that the parties hostile to his government had acquired a firm, marked and decided character, which they had never displayed before. This was owing more, indeed, to the decline of his own influence, than to any additional force gained either by Royalists or Republicans. Numerically they were still feeble; but they now stood out in bolder relief, rose distinctly to the sight, even as breakers long

concealed beneath the waves of the ocean reveal their black and broken masses when falling tides recede from off the rock-bound shore. Nor were the disasters sustained in the field the only cause of the Emperor's declining power and influence: there were many others resulting from the nature of his government, and augmenting in pressure with the length of his wars and the continued stagnation of trade. The hideous conscription, tearing with blood-dripping fangs the youths of France from their homes and families, had become odious from one extremity of the empire to the other. The ordinary price of substitutes was from eight to nine thousand francs—L.300 to L.350; and families who ruined themselves, sold their best valuables, perhaps, to raise this heavy sum, and save an only son from the iron grasp of war, gained often but a short respite by the sacrifice; and had frequently, at the end of two or three campaigns, the grief and mortification to see the recruit thus purchased off again demanded. And woe to those who concealed a conscript, or to the family that counted a refractory one among its members. *Gens d'armes* were placed at free quarters in their houses; heavy fines were levied upon them; and the poor, in default of payment, saw their miserable property and wretched moveables exposed to public sale: even hope fled offenders against the conscription law; for to them mercy never came. Capital punishments were frequent; in all directions, at the very gates of Paris, gangs of refractory conscripts, chained and ironed, were seen traversing France on their way to the fortresses. The more numerous bands of those who escaped filled the woods and forests of retired mountain districts where, secure by the sympathy of the people, they set all pursuit at defiance.

The *Douanes* laws were as rigorous as those of the

conscription. The prohibition against the introduction of foreign merchandise, rendered an absolute system of terror necessary for the suppression of smuggling. Special tribunals punished all who were connected with the contraband trade, and sent the smugglers in chains to the galleys. By the application of a half-barbarous law, the *droits reunis* gathered in what the *douanes* had spared; and the tribunals were constantly occupied in punishing offences —too frequently construed into crimes—against the customs and excise, which the treasury always pursued with unyielding rigour; for Napoleon was as inflexible on the subject of his commercial as of his military code. So tenacious was he on this point, indeed, that he did not hesitate to cancel the verdict of juries who acquitted supposed smugglers. Confiscations, seizures, imprisonment, the sale by auction, in public market-places, of the goods and furniture of the poor, were the natural consequences. And as the masses naturally sympathized with the sufferers, the daily recurrence of such scenes made them hate a government guilty of what they very justly deemed so many acts of cruelty and oppression. Enlightened men easily foresaw that such a system could not continue; and in 1812, the Republican Gregoire, a member of the senate, had already drawn out a decree for the deposition of the Emperor, which he was vain and daring enough to show to many of his friends: he only waited a favourable time to bring it forward, and as we shall see that time—long delayed, because there was no strong point or party round which the disaffected could rally—came at last.

Scorned by the young, forgotten by the old, the Bourbons had long ceased to exercise any influence on the minds of the French people. Some ancient nobles, a few returned emigrants, and members of the higher ranks of

society, remained loyally attached to their ancient race of kings; but however anxiously they might desire a restoration, it is not likely that the most enthusiastic of the party entertained serious hopes of such an event, at the time when Napoleon's star was at its zenith. The Republicans, though less respectable as a class, were far more numerous, and were always considered by the Imperial Government as a more powerful and dangerous body.

The retreat from Moscow produced an immediate change in this respect. The name of the exiled family was now frequently mentioned, and many began to compare the blessings of peace enjoyed under their mild sway, with the pressure of endless war endured under the iron rule of the Empire. The disasters of the Saxon campaign, and the advance of hostile armies towards the French frontier, augmented these symptoms. The Bourbons, their character, conduct, temper; the change which a return of the old dynasty might effect in the tenure of property, were subjects of universal conversation. Savary's police was powerless against these speculations; and Louis XVIII. and his partisans neglected no opportunity to convince the interested, that all would be maintained in their rank, dignities, and possessions. As events proceeded, the belief, also, that the Bourbons would abolish the conscription and the *droits reunis*, gained such strength to their cause among the lower and middling classes, that the Republicans, conscious of the impossibility of restoring a consulate—well aware that the Kings of Europe were not advancing against France for the purpose of setting up Republican institutions—threw the weight of their party into the scale of the exiled family. Their object was to obtain at least a constitutional monarchy, with sufficient guarantees for the liberties of the people. Whether it was still in

Napoleon's power to adopt measures capable of averting the evils resulting from so many errors, from so long an indulgence in pride and rapacity, may be doubtful. But certain it is, that his conduct was ill calculated to gain the confidence or attachment of the nation. His first act on arriving at St Cloud, was to assume the military dictatorship, and augment the most odious taxes—those on doors, houses, and salt—by his own authority, and without even waiting for the forms prescribed by the Constitution. The money was wanted: for notwithstanding his boasted system of finance, the treasury was completely empty; and so destitute of credit was his government, that nothing could have been raised by loan. The taxes might, therefore, be indispensable, but nothing could be so ill judged as to assume an illegal power to enforce hateful and unpopular measures: it was rendering tyranny doubly odious.

A more legal, though more frightful enactment, was soon to follow. Shortly before the battle of Leipzig, the Empress, in her character of Regent, had demanded a levy of 250,000 conscripts for the service of the State; then came a call for 30,000, intended specially for the defence of the Pyrenees, threatened by the advance of Lord Wellington's army; and now came Napoleon himself with an additional demand for 300,000 more: six hundred thousand men called for and granted in less than two months, and eleven hundred thousand since the year 1811! History had no example of such charnel-house calls on the blood of a people; and though the submissive senate complied with these frighful requisitions, thirty black balls thrown into the voting urn, marked the growth of opposition even in that long-dormant assembly.

While resistance to his will was thus displaying itself in the very senate, so many years the abject slave of

Imperial despotism, measures of defence and military preparations were carried on with all possible activity, though with no very considerable result. The treasury and the arsenals were alike empty, and the taxes came in as slowly as the newly-drawn conscripts. A general lassitude pervaded the country; the nation was tired of war; and peace on any terms was the general desire from one extremity of the empire to the other. And all attempts to rally the patriotism of the people round the government, to awaken enthusiasm in its favour, were as unavailing as those made to render the war national, and induce them to rise *en masse* for the defence of the soil. It was in vain that pro-consuls were despatched into the provinces to rouse the population; as vain were the declarations of the journals, announcing that the nation was taking arms, ready to crush the first invaders that should cross the sacred frontier. France was not disposed to rise *en masse*, and engage in a national war for the purpose of upholding the kings of Napoleon's dynasty; and the efforts made to awaken a Saragossa spirit by military and patriot spectacles represented on the Parisian theatres, and by the martial songs sung through the streets, only met with the success such puerilities deserved.

These unpromising appearances, the hope of diminishing the number of his enemies, of exciting discord in their camp, perhaps, induced Napoleon, at this period of difficulty, to perform two acts of very tardy justice. The first was the liberation of Pius VII., who, after further attempts had been made to shake his firmness, was allowed to depart from Fontainbleau. But as if an act of justice was contrary to the nature of Napoleon, he directed the police to detain the Pontiff, and delay his journey under various pretexts, at the very time when

he was signing the diplomatic document which restored him to liberty. The Pope's correspondence with Count Metternich shows that he was at no time treated with more suspicious precaution than at the very moment of his liberation, and during his journey.

The other act of justice—of atonement rather—performed, was the liberation of Ferdinand VII. Spain was completely lost to France; her troops had been expelled the country; and the armies of England, Spain, and Portugal, pursuing their victorious career, had established themselves on the French territory. There could be no object, therefore, in retaining Ferdinand a prisoner, but much might be gained by replacing him on his throne: Spain might be embroiled with England, and the Duke of Wellington's army weakened by the withdrawal of the Spanish troops. A negotiation was therefore opened with the captives of Valençay. Napoleon wrote to Ferdinand, informing him "that the English were exciting anarchy and Jacobinism in Spain, endeavouring to overthrow the crown and the nobility, in order to establish a republic," and proposed that he should resume the government of his kingdom, provided he would restore the ancient relations between France and Spain such as they were before the commencement of the war. Ferdinand, well aware that an engagement entered into at Valençay, and while in actual durance, would not be deemed very binding on the entrapped captive of Bayonne, agreed to the proposal; and a treaty was signed accordingly on the 11th December, by which the liberated monarch promised that the English should evacuate Spain. Owing to unexplained delays, Ferdinand only crossed the Spanish frontier on the 13th March, three months after the signature of the treaty, at too late a period to influence the events of the

war by his return. "It is not known," says Norvins, "who contrived to retard the execution of a treaty from which so many advantages were expected." The historian insinuates, in fact, that it was effected by treachery and intrigue, and was the work of Napoleon's domestic enemies; and thus strives unconsciously, like so many others labouring in the same cause, to represent his idol as a man without a will, and absolutely powerless when seated on his throne of might!

The time for the meeting of the Legislative Assembly now arrived, and the Emperor opened the session in great state. And as he was desirous to obtain the aid of the members in making the war national in case the Allies should cross the Rhine, he caused the documents resulting from M. de St Agnan's communication to be laid before them.

The Assembly, on their part, appointed a commission to examine and report upon the papers. Their report, which has become celebrated, was drawn up in respectful terms, but spoke a language totally new to Napoleon; for it attempted to give him advice, and contained some plain though indirect reflections on the arbitrary nature of his government. It recommended "that the Emperor should be requested to follow the example of Louis XIV., who, when desirous of restoring the energy of the nation, acquainted them with the efforts he had made to obtain peace. It was only necessary," continued this document, "to assure the French people, that the war was to be continued for the sole object of the independence of France, to reanimate public spirit, and induce all to concur in the general defence." After some farther argument to the same effect, the report concluded by recommending "that his Majesty should be supplicated to restore to the subject some degree of internal liberty,

and maintain the active execution of laws capable of preserving the rights and properties of Frenchmen."

This report, which was adopted by the Assembly, excited Napoleon's displeasure in the highest degree; he instantly caused the message to be suppressed, the Legislative Assembly to be prorogued, and their hall to be closed and guarded by soldiers. In the first moment of irritation, he even contemplated throwing the members of the commission into the dungeons of Vincennes, or dealing more severely with them; but though he did not resort to such extremities, he nevertheless embraced the first opportunity of giving vent to his choler. It was usual for high state functionaries and deputations of all public bodies to pay their respects to the Emperor on New Year's day, and a large circle was consequently assembled at the Tuileries on the 1st of January 1814. Napoleon received every one with cold and stately reserve, till observing a party of deputies assembled, he advanced with hasty steps towards them, and measuring them with eyes in which fierce resentment was expressed, assailed them in the following bitter terms :—"You might have done a great deal of good, and you have only done harm. I have suppressed your address because it is seditious. Eleven parts of you are good citizens, but the twelfth consists of rebels. Lainé corresponds with the English; the rest are hot-headed fools, desirous of anarchy like the Girondins, whom such opinions brought to the scaffold. Is it when the enemy are on the frontier that you demand an alteration of the constitution? Rather follow the example of Alsace and Franche-Compté, where the inhabitants ask for leaders and arms to drive back the invaders. You are not the representatives of the people; you are only the deputies of the departments of the empire. Yet you seek in your ad-

dress to draw a distinction between the sovereign and the people. I am the only representative of the people." Here his gesticulation became very violent. "Do you understand me? I am the only representative of the people! Which of you could support such a burthen? The throne—what is the throne?—a piece of wood covered with velvet. I alone hold the place of the people. If France desires a constitution that does not suit me, she must seek another monarch. It is at me the enemies aim, more than at France; but are we, therefore, to sacrifice part of France? Do I not sacrifice my self-love and my feelings of superiority to obtain peace? Think you I speak proudly? If I do, it is because I have courage, and because France owes her greatness to me. Yes, your address is unworthy of the legislative body and of me: if it circulates in the departments, to your shame be it; I will cause it to be printed in the *Moniteur*, with notes that shall expose your motives. There have been abuses I know, but this was not the time to bring them forward. Even if I had done wrong, you ought not to have reproached me with it thus openly: people do not wash their foul linen before the world. Return to your departments, and say that I am sincerely desirous of peace: France requires it, and I shall make every sacrifice to obtain it. In three months you will have peace; the enemies will be driven from our territory, or I shall be dead! Yes, gentlemen," he said, placing his hand on his quickly-perspiring brow, "in three months you will have peace, or I shall be dead!"

This speech, delivered with great vehemence of manner and gesticulation, and several times interrupted, while the speaker walked quickly up and down before the silent and astonished deputies, shows how very destitute Napoleon was of that mental composure which is

so generally ascribed to him. There might be some truth in several of the remarks he made; but after the prorogation of the Assembly, they were no longer called for: and nothing could be so ill judged as this public reprimand, or insult rather, to the only popular body in the constitution, at the very moment when the defence of the country called for general unanimity and the best understanding between all the directing powers of the State, and when the closing of the hall of the Legislative Assembly had already produced a most unfavourable effect. The speech is curious in other respects; as it shows that Napoleon really believed himself possessed of that mental superiority to which he laid claim. This gives some clue to his fortunes: for confidence when aided by success, and above all by military success, readily communicates itself to others, and necessarily becomes the first stepping-stone to greatness in revolutions. The strange and confused notion he entertained of the constitution, is also rendered evident by this philippic: for he declares himself "the representative of the people," though it is not very easy to see towards whom the sovereign can represent the people, as it can hardly be towards himself or towards them: we here again find the want of clear and well-defined ideas, so constantly observable in all his harangues. Of the vulgar tone which pervades the whole outburst of passion, calling senators and legislators traitors to the State, nothing need be said; so that we may safely proceed to inquire how far his conduct redeemed the concluding pledge thus publicly given.

On the right bank of the Rhine, two hundred thousand men eager for a "*Houra* on Paris," were anxiously waiting orders to cross the border stream; while at Frankfort, ministers and generals, diplomatists and

strategists, were deliberating in calm debates, how best to derive advantage from the victories achieved. Opinions differed in their councils; many still dreaded Napoleon: from Danzig to Mayence, the principal fortresses of Germany were in his hands; and the vast population of France, the boundless resources of the country, might, it was thought, furnish him with formidable means of defence, perhaps even of future aggression, if advantages were not taken of the present opportunity to negotiate. The ill success of the invasion of Champagne, at the commencement of the Revolution, was repeatedly quoted; and a rising *en masse* of the French people, and a national war represented as highly probable—by many it was declared to be certain.

Some advised half measures, and recommended that a defensive position should be taken up along the right bank of the Rhine, which ought on no account to be passed; others voted for the invasion as soon as the reserves and reinforcements should have arrived; while the ablest and the best, among whom Blücher was foremost, recommended an immediate advance upon Paris. "Napoleon," said this clear-sighted soldier, "has no reserves in France; the fortresses are without garrisons, and unprepared for defence. We are greatly superior to him in numbers; and if we march on Paris, he will be forced to throw the remains of his army into the strongholds, and thus leave the road open to us; or he will keep his army together, leave the fortresses at our mercy, and try his fortune in a general battle. In neither case will he have time to prepare; but if we delay, we give him leisure to strengthen his army, secure his fortresses, and make the most of the resources still at his disposal."

Subsequent events amply proved the justness of this

advice. The Allies, joined by Marshal Wrede, arrived on the banks of the Rhine with about 200,000 men; and had they crossed the river after giving their troops some ten days' rest, left forty or fifty thousand men to observe rather than to blockade the feebly garrisoned fortresses, they could easily, with a proper economy of their means, have brought a hundred and twenty or thirty thousand men into action against any force capable of opposing their march towards the capital of France. It is not, indeed, easy to see what army could have been assembled to meet them in the field. Napoleon had brought only 70,000 men across the Rhine, and one half of these were disabled by sickness, to which thousands fell victims, before they had been many days established in their cantonments; and so few were the disposable troops found in France, that six weeks afterwards, he could only bring 50,000 men into the battle-field of La Rothiére, to be defeated by about 70,000 men of the Allies. What then could he have done had not this valuable time for preparation been allowed him? Nothing: he had already lost his crown in the plains of Leipzig; France tendered no willing aid, received him without enthusiasm, in silent consternation; but his adversaries wanted resolution to follow up their fortune and seize the brightest trophy of victory.

Blücher was already prepared to cross the Rhine on the 17th November, but the movement was arrested by superior orders; for though the invasion of France was resolved upon, the Allies still determined to await farther reinforcements; and it was not till the end of December that the advance actually commenced. The Grand Army, under Schwarzenberg, marching through Switzerland, crossed the Rhine at Basle and Schaffhausen on the 22d December; Blücher effecting the

passage of the river at Coblentz, Bacharach, and Manheim, on the first day of the New Year. Napoleon, who had never respected neutral rights, insisted strongly in his manifestos on the injustice of this aggression on the neutrality of Switzerland. His advocates have, of course, re-echoed his assertions; and so ready has the world been to receive every statement of these parties, that most historians have followed in the same path, and brought this accusation against the Allies; though, properly speaking, Switzerland could lay as little claim to neutrality as France itself. Under Napoleon's banner, Swiss troops had fought against the Allies in Spain, Germany, and Russia; and after such acts of open hostility, no State can claim the rights of neutrality upon its own unacknowledged declaration. The Swiss were, besides, as willing as the Germans and Italians to shake off the heavy yoke of Napoleon. He had exercised absolute sway over them; had deprived them of the city and district of Geneva, the canton of Vaud, and the roads of Mount Simplon, and had surely no great favour to expect at their hands: nor did he meet with any; for, by a regularly signed treaty, they yielded up the passes of their country to the vast army now marching against him.

If the Allies had been slow in their movements, the mighty force they now brought into the field seemed almost to justify their tardiness by the promise of success such multitudes appeared to command. Two hundred and sixty-five thousand men, supported by formidable reserves, poured into France. Of these, two hundred thousand formed the main army under Prince Schwarzenberg, sixty-five thousand, the so-called Silesian army, under its veteran leader, Field-Marshal Blücher. The invaders fixed upon the plains of the Aube as their rendezvous; and there, at the end of January, both hosts

met accordingly, having experienced little or no opposition from the troops of Napoleon, and none whatever from the inhabitants, who, separating his interest from that of the country, witnessed the progress of events with the most perfect indifference. But if the Allies had met with little or no opposition, the necessity of blockading and observing so many strongholds, of detaching a large force in the direction of Lyons, where Marshal Augereau was assembling troops, had so greatly reduced their strength, as again to give the timid and peace-seeking party considerable influence at the head-quarters of the sovereigns. This party which, like a poisonous weed, had taken root in the very heart of the army, strove to check all military enterprise of hazard, and declared that the din of arms would only arouse the slumbering lion, and that every thing ought now to be effected by negotiation. The war-party declared, on the other hand, that nothing would be obtained from Napoleon unless by force of arms, and that victory alone could bring negotiations to a successful termination.

The events of the previous campaign had given so much weight to the opinion of Marshal Blücher, that it was deemed advisable to ascertain his views on the state of affairs; but as the diplomatic party were unwilling to make the inquiry, Prince Schwarzenberg undertook the task. He sent a confidential officer to the Field-Marshal, who had established his head-quarters at Brienne, with directions to state the case fully to him, and obtain his frank opinion in return. It was given without reserve. "We must march to Paris," said Blücher. "Napoleon has paid his visit to every capital in Europe, and can we do less than return the compliment? And not only must we pay this visit, but we must hurl him from the throne which, for the hap-

piness of Europe and of our country, he ought never to have ascended. We shall have no permanent peace till he is down; and it is our duty to strike him down accordingly." This was the first declaration openly made, that Napoleon ought to be dethroned: it met with no very favourable reception at head-quarters, where Blücher's conduct was at this time greatly criticised, and he himself accused of entertaining extravagant and exaggerated notions. With many, however, his opinion had weight; with the young, the ardent, and enterprising, his words were words of power; and the result proved that they had not been cast to the winds. Many are the brave and noble projects in which thousands are ready to act and to strike, that remain unattempted because the first bold and manly word which can alone call the deed to life is wanting. A march to Paris was still looked upon by numerous parties as a chimerical idea, a visionary project, that none ventured to suggest; but which, when once proposed from an influential quarter, found ready supporters, willing, and conscientiously willing, to follow where they had not ventured to lead.

And where now was he who had promised to allay the storm or perish in the attempt? Entire provinces of France had been traversed by hostile armies, unchallenged in their progress: and was the haughty invader of so many lands not to strike a single blow for the protection of his splendid realm?

It was not so: the will to strike was not wanting, but the means at his immediate disposal were few; and we see no vestige of skill in any effort made to concentrate the forces scattered over the wide surface of the country. Napoleon had never contemplated the invasion of France as possible, and was now totally unpre-

pared for the event. The fortresses were without sufficient garrisons or armament; and he who had strewed Europe from Moscow to Lisbon with the bones of slaughtered Frenchmen, now wanted an efficient army to defend the empire in its need. And though he had often achieved great conquests with great means, he had never given any proof of that real greatness which effects great things with small means; and was not to do so now. Every attempt to render the war national had failed; and from Capefigue we learn that a general despondency and feeling of lassitude pervaded Paris and the Court, extending even to the persons who surrounded the Emperor. All seemed to feel that the great drama was coming to a close; and even Napoleon himself appeared to labour under some melancholy presentiment that fortune had forsaken him. Constant reviews of troops in the *Place* of the *Carousel*, intended to encourage the population of the capital,—possibly to restore in his own breast the confidence he had ceased to feel,—deceived no one. As little was effected by embodying the National Guard of Paris; for all were conscious that a few armed citizens could offer but slight resistance to invading armies, which thousand-tongued rumour had already represented as more numerous than the hosts of Xerxes and Darius. But it was needless to despond; and he who had ravaged Europe, and risen by the sword, could only hope to stand his ground by aid of the sword; and it had now to be tried.

Expecting to obtain some sympathy from the National Guard of the capital, Napoleon convened a meeting of their officers at the Tuileries on the 23d of January. To the number of nine hundred they lined the Hall of the Marshals, and the Emperor, accompanied by the Empress and the King of Rome—who was carried in

the arms of the Countess of Montesquiou,—taking his stand in the centre of the assembly, thus addressed them :—" Gentlemen of the National Guard of Paris, I am happy to see you around me. I am about to place myself at the head of the army. On leaving the capital, I confide to you what is dearest to me on earth,—my wife and child. Owing to the manœuvres I shall have to execute, parties of the enemy may possibly approach your walls ; but rest assured, that it can only be for a moment, and that I shall instantly arrive to your aid. I recommend to you to remain united, and feel confident you will repel with indignation all attempts to shake your loyalty and duty to your sovereign." Though his brow was dark with care, he uttered these words in a firm voice ; and then taking the King of Rome in his arms, walked through the ranks of the assembled officers, presenting the boy to them, while the hall rang with the shouts of " *Vive l' Empereur, vive l' Imperatrice et le Roi de Rome!*" But it was not a moment when the fate of empires could be affected by mere scenes.

Having consigned the regency to Marie Louise, and appointed his brother Joseph Lieutenant-General of the empire, he took leave of his friends and relations on the 22d. A general gloom pervaded the palace, and it is said that he was greatly dejected. Early on the 25th he parted from his wife and son, whom he beheld for the last time ; and at four o'clock in the morning he left Paris, and proceeded with his usual rapidity to the head-quarters of the army, then at Chalons. At every stage, numbers of persons, particularly women and children, gathered round his carriage ; but the shouts of *Vive l' Empereur !* were few and far between ; whilst from the midst of every crowd, calls of *A bas les droits réunis !* were distinctly heard. The words might well be deemed of

evil augury ; as they proved how many thought tyranny so near its end that it could be taunted with impunity.

At Chalons, Napoleon received the first certain tidings of the enemy, and learned that the armies of Blücher and Schwarzenberg were already in communication, and that the head-quarters of the former were then at *Brienne-le-Château:* the very town in which he had passed so many years of boyhood when a scholar at the military academy. Was it the wish to liberate from the presence of the enemy the haunts of his early—his happier days perhaps, or the wish to show himself in power and splendour on the very ground where the boy had shared in mimic sports of war, that now induced Napoleon to rush upon his countless adversaries? We fear he was not so influenced, for there was little of romantic feeling in his character ; but if his advance was not occasioned by such motives, it must be looked upon as a mere stake of desperation, feebly played when the game was engaged,—at the very moment such games should be boldly played, —and without any clear idea of what the ultimate results might prove.

The army consisted of 52,000 men,* and they were

* At the commencement of operations, the French forces might be estimated at 150,000 men: they were distributed as follows:—

In the fortresses of the Netherlands,	16,000 men.
Under General Maison in the Netherlands,	20,000 „
Marshal Augereau, Lyons,	1,600 „
In the fortresses of the Rhine,	36,000 „
Marshal Mortier,	12,000 „
Marshal Victor,	14,000 „
Marshal Marmont,	20,000 „
Marshal M'Donald,	22,000 „
Marshal Ney,	10,000 „
	151,600

But of this number only 78,000 men, the corps under the Marshals, could be considered effective for service in the field. Rein-

now to assail nearly three times their own number of tried soldiers, vastly superior in cavalry and artillery. On the 27th, the advanced posts of the Allies were driven from St Dizier; and on the 29th, Brienne itself was attacked. Blücher, aware that large reinforcements were advancing to his aid, merely held his ground long enough to make the French show their forces, and then, as night closed, fell back towards Trannes, a few miles higher up the Aube. In this indecisive and unimportant combat, both commanders narrowly escaped death or captivity. The left wing of the French cavalry having been thrown, a band of Cossacks, pursuing the fugitives, arrived in rear of the army and fell upon the Emperor's staff, and one of these wild horsemen had actually levelled his lance at Napoleon himself when a pistol-shot, fired by Gourgaud, brought him to the ground. Blücher, on his part, was nearly taken prisoner. Shortly before nightfall, he had ascended the castle to obtain a better view of the enemy; and while there, French *tirailleurs* entered the town by an unoccupied passage, and might have seized him had not their firing given the alarm.

On this incident, French and English writers have founded one of their many romances intended to enhance the fame of Napoleon's military genius; which, had it been of a very high order, would not have required such aid. The story is this:—"The Silesian army was," they say, "so completely surprised by the rapid and skilful advance of Napoleon, that the Field-Marshal himself was in danger of being taken." The truth is,

forcements arrived from various quarters during the progress of the campaign; but they did not much exceed the losses sustained from battle, sickness, and fatigue. This of course does not include Suchet's army and the troops that might, perhaps, have been drawn from Italy.

that there was no surprise whatever; and the advance of the French was so unskilful, Napoleon's column was so completely isolated from Mortier's corps, that the Allies had a fair opportunity for attacking them in detail. The project was contemplated, but abandoned because the large reinforcements at hand rendered victory ultimately certain, and prevented all risk from being encountered.

Master of Brienne, Napoleon seemed satisfied with his conquest; for he remained perfectly stationary during the 30th and 31st, giving his enemies full time to prepare their own measures. Nor did they neglect the opportunity. The principal corps of Blücher's army not having joined, Prince Schwarzenberg *lent* him the troops of Marshal Wrede and the Prince of Wirtemberg, and ordered him to attack the French on the 1st of February. These arrangements seem the most extraordinary we have yet found recorded in military history. The Prince Generalissimo has an army of at least 130,000 men, perfectly disposable and ready in hand; but instead of using them to crush an adversary who is close in his front, he deputes a subordinate to attack the enemy with half that number, and gratify the other half of the army with the display of a brilliant military *spectacle!* But if the orders were extraordinary, they were at least boldly executed. The corps were no sooner in position to act, than Blücher gave the signal to advance. The movement was not unattended with difficulty: for a sudden thaw had so deepened the miry soil, that the march of the attacking columns was greatly impeded, and half the guns left behind, the horses being employed to assist in dragging forward the remainder.

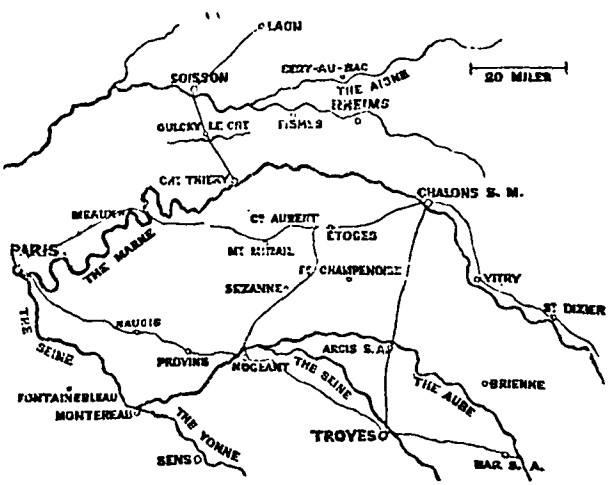
A Bavarian bugler, a deserter from Marshal Wrede's corps, was the first who gave intelligence of the advance of the Allies. Napoleon refused to credit the state-

ment; but when it was confirmed by tidings from the outposts, he mounted his horse, and issued orders for an immediate retreat; passing, however, near the Young Guard at the moment when the first shots were fired, he was greeted with such enthusiastic shouts of *Vive l'Empereur*, that he resolved not to lose what seemed a promising opportunity. "*L'artillerie en avant*," he exclaimed: the command was quickly obeyed; and thus, at three o'clock in the afternoon, commenced the battle of La Rothiére.

By the concurrent testimony of all the allied officers, the French were badly posted; but they defended their ground with great bravery; and it was long after nightfall before they resigned the contest. The number of killed and wounded was nearly equal on both sides; but the French left 3000 prisoners and 73 guns in the hands of the victors: a heavy loss for a small and hastily collected army, already very deficient in artillery. The vanquished retired in the direction of Troyes. They were in great confusion, suffered much on the march; and the despondency was so universal in the ranks, that Napoleon afterwards declared at St Helena, that he had serious thoughts of resigning the crown. It is now certain that the victory of La Rothiére would have brought the Allies to Paris, had they followed up their success with judgment and rapidity. What occasioned the many errors of which they were guilty, and which for a time endangered the prospects of the campaign, we have no means of ascertaining; but looking only at known causes and results, at the quick and dazzling changes of fortune that made even the bold pause in their progress and doubt in their strength, we may safely assert that military annals present no period of history so deeply interesting and instructive, as the few weeks intervening

between the combat of La Rothiére and the capture of Paris. It is with regret that we are obliged to confine ourselves to a brief and scanty outline of events, which, if described at length and with proper details, would far exceed the limits of this Memoir. It will be needless to say, that all accounts of this campaign founded solely on French statements are not only romances, but very weak and puerile romances besides.

In a council of war held at Brienne on the 2d February, the Allies resolved that Blücher's army, some of the detached corps of which had already reached the Marne, should advance between that river and the Aube;



the Grand Army taking the direction of Troyes, and following the line of the Seine. Count Wittgenstein's corps, with the cavalry of General Pahlen, was to move along the right bank of the Aube, and form the link of communication between Blücher and Schwarzenberg: General Seslawin was ordered to assist in the same ser-

vice, with twelve regiments of Cossacks. The separation of the armies, rendered advisable by the difficulty of finding supplies for such numerous bodies, was not in itself a very essential error,—they had been separated during the campaign in Saxony ; but it was necessary that they should act in concert, and be always ready to lend each other prompt and efficient aid : and to effect this, a well understood plan of operation—not to be deviated from unless by mutual understanding and a regular and secure mode of communication—was indispensable. A disregard of these precautions, owing most probably to inattention in matters of detail, led to disasters which for a moment endangered the very safety of the army.

Following the French, the main body of the Allies reached Troyes on the 8th ; Schwarzenberg having thus taken seven days to traverse thirty miles of country in pursuit of a vanquished enemy.

Blücher was more forward. Having effected his junction with Yorck and Kleist, he was driving the corps of M'Donald before him ; and his advanced-guard, under Sacken, had already reached La-Ferté-sous-Jouare. Cossacks had approached within sight of Meaux, within twelve leagues of Paris, when the unexpected arrival of Napoleon instantly changed the aspect of affairs, and threw those completely on the defensive who had thought themselves marching to certain conquest.

The French army had reached Troyes after the defeat of La Rothiére, in the most depressed condition. The gloom and despondency that pervaded the troops extended quickly to the citizens, who, dreading an attack, and anxious to preserve their property, evinced no friendly feeling towards the vanquished, and could hardly be prevailed upon to furnish the exhausted soldiers

returning from a sanguinary combat, with the necessary refreshments. The Emperor himself was in the lowest spirits, and dark and moody as he was on his arrival, had still to hear evil tidings: for it was here that he received the news of Murat's defection; that his brother-in-law had forsaken his cause, and joined the Allies. Disasters thus breaking in upon him from all quarters, soon bent down a spirit not resting on any solid or noble foundation; and urgent instructions were instantly despatched to Caulaincourt, his representative at the Congress of Chatillon, to lose no time in signing a treaty that "should save the capital, and prevent a battle—the last resource of the empire."

On the approach of the Allies, the vanquished army were obliged to continue their retreat; and all accounts represent officers and soldiers as greatly discouraged by those constant retrograde movements. "Where will this end?" was the question universally asked from rank to rank; even the Emperor himself had the anguish of his heart depicted on his countenance. At Nogeant he received a despatch from Caulaincourt, announcing that the Allies, availing themselves of the success of their arms, demanded the restitution of all the conquests made by France since the commencement of the Revolution. And Baron Fain, in relating the circumstance, ascribes a speech to him which has already passed into history, and must be repeated here, as it tends to illustrate the inconsistency of his character, or the little reliance to be placed on the accounts furnished by his most popular supporters. When pressed by Berthier and the Duke of Bassano to accept the terms, he thus replies:—

"What! you would have me sign such a treaty, and trample on the oath I have taken? Unexampled misfortunes have obliged me to offer the restitution of my own

conquests; but to relinquish those made before me, forfeit the pledge reposed in me, and as a reward for so much exertion, so many victories, and so much blood expended, leave France less than I received it? No! that is what I never will consent to! Could I do so, indeed, without treachery or cowardice? You fear the continuance of the war: I fear the consequence of events you do not perceive. If we relinquish the barrier of the Rhine, it is not only France that recedes, but Prussia and Austria that advance. France requires peace; but the one here intended to be imposed upon us would lead to more misfortune than the most disastrous war. What should I be to France were I to sign her humiliation? and what answer could I make to the Republicans in the Senate, who should demand from me the barrier of the Rhine? Heaven preserve me from such disgrace! Reply to Caulaincourt in what terms you please; but tell him, that I will expose myself to the worst chances of war rather than sign such a treaty."

Whatever may be the merit of the sentiments here expressed, they are at least completely at variance with the instructions so urgently sent from Troyes; so very urgently, indeed, that they were repeated on two successive days. These instructions were not recalled till after the battle of Montmirail; and if they were not acted upon at this moment, it was owing, as we shall see, to the vacillating conduct of the Duke of Vicenza, who was subsequently blamed by his party for not signing the treaty and saving the empire.

During his stay at Nogeant, Napoleon also received tidings from Marshal M'Donald, who reported himself unable to hold his ground on the Marne; adding, that Cossack patrōls had already appeared in sight of Meaux, within twelve leagues of the capital! This left little

room for hesitation; and here we must admit, that for once the leader was worthy of his soldiers.

The dilatory movements of Schwarzenberg had given the French breathing-time. At Troyes, and afterwards at Nogeant, Napoleon had been joined by reinforcements from Paris, including a division of the Guard, and by 8000 men from the army of Spain: he was, therefore, in condition to take the field again; and as Blücher's advance towards the capital rendered instant measures necessary, he determined to fall upon the Silesian army with the whole of his disposable force. It was a bold and able resolve, and the best ever formed by Napoleon during the whole of his military career. The Prussian was not only the most forward and enterprising of his adversaries, he was the weakest also; had not above 50,000 men under his command; and could therefore, if fortune favoured, be assailed with equal numbers. A fair chance of success was thus offered; and in case of victory, the army might calculate on returning to the banks of the Seine, before the tardy Schwarzenberg could execute his movement on Paris.

These circumstances furnished clear and intelligible grounds for action; the statements of historians that "the Emperor's eagle-eye" saw and seized the opportunity of falling on the separate corps of Blücher, and destroying them in detail, are as usual mere puerilities, devised for effect by writers anxious to enhance the glory of an idol, without being able to perceive the real merits of his conduct when it chanced to have any. He could not know that it would be in his power to assail the corps of the Silesian army in detail; because these corps were on the march when his movement commenced, and it was impossible to foresee what their relative position would be when within reach of attack. Besides, these

corps might have been assembled with the greatest possible facility, had it not been for a succession of those untoward accidents, so frequently resulting in war from a want of perfect harmony in the working of the military machinery by which the movements of great armies must necessarily be directed,—from an imperfect striking in of all its different parts, generally occasioned by inattention or inability in mere matters of detail. Such incidents are usually termed fatalities by the vanquished, and left unacknowledged by the victors, who have rarely the candour to confess how much is due to Fortune. In what is termed Napoleon's expedition to the Marne, the fickle goddess acted a most conspicuous part.

From Nogeant, there is a road that traverses the low and swampy tract of country situated between the Seine and the marshy streamlet called the Petit Marin, and then falls into the high way from Chalons to Paris, at the village of Champ-Aubert. With his army, Napoleon now threw himself into this road. It is paved as far as Sezanne through the worst part of the marshes, but is nowhere good; and was at the period of which we are speaking so deep and difficult, that 500 horses had to be collected from the neighbouring *Communes*, to aid in dragging the guns along. High stakes rested, however, on the success of the enterprise; and the troops—their spirits reviving as they were led towards the enemy—spared neither toil nor exertion to bring it to a favourable termination. The march was long, the roads were deep, but their gallantry overcame every obstacle. On the 9th, they reached Sezanne, where General Carpow was stationed with a party of Cossacks. This officer, after reporting the arrival of the enemy to his immediate superior, Count Sacken, fell back upon his corps, leaving Blücher totally ignorant of what had happened. It was

only late at night that a patrol of French cavalry, engaging some Prussian outposts close to head-quarters, gave notice of the advancing foe ; and this at the very time when the Marshal received from Prince Schwarzenberg the intimation that the troops of Wittgenstein, Pahlen, and Seslawin, had been withdrawn to the left bank of the Aube ! The flank of the Silesian army was thus left completely exposed, at the very moment when the thunderbolt was about to fall.

Instant orders were sent to Count Sacken, whose army was in front pursuing M'Donald, not to engage in any serious action, but to fall back and join the Field-Marshal at Vertus, or combine his operations with Yorck who was at Château-Thierry behind the Marne. The Russian, misinformed regarding the strength of the enemy, replied that he was in no danger from the troops which had passed through Sezanne, as they were few in number, and that he should therefore march upon Vertus. He was soon to be undeceived.

Napoleon, unchecked in his progress, arrived at Champ-Aubert on the 10th, and confronted General Olsufiew, who with 3500 men and 25 pieces of cannon there watched the outlet of the Nogeant road, and now attempted to arrest the progress of a whole army. This commander had been called to account for leaving unguarded a passage leading into Brienne on the evening of the action, and now thought himself bound to redeem his credit by engaging in a hopeless contest. It was in vain that regimental and staff officers urged him to fall back : " Remember Brienne !" was his reply to every remonstrance, and meeting the enemy without any advantage of position, saw his corps defeated with the loss of half their numbers, and was himself carried a prisoner into the presence of the French Emperor.

Napoleon was now in the centre of the Silesian army. On his right was Blücher at Vertus, with the corps of Kleist and Capczewitch ; on his left, Sacken at La-Ferté-sous-Jouare ; in his front and behind the Marne, Yorck at Château-Thierry. But there was really nothing gained by this position ; for the separate corps might easily have joined behind the Marne, had not Sacken persisted in his error, and advanced to meet the French instead of falling back on General Yorck, which the latter strongly recommended, and which the Marshal's orders fully warranted. As often happens, however, one error led to the commission of many others.

Leaving Marshal Marmont to watch the motions of Blücher, Napoleon, on the morning after the action of Champ-Aubert, wheeled to the left, and hastened to assail Count Sacken. This officer, informed at last that considerable forces were advancing from Sezanne, had countermarched his troops ; and having called on General Yorck, who had reached Château-Thierry, for assistance, was, in disregard of Blücher's orders, moving on to meet the enemy. The parties encountered at Montmirail, and the Russians, outnumbered by Napoleon's army, were defeated with great loss, and would probably have been entirely destroyed had not the arrival of General Yorck's advance-guard disengaged them, and enabled them to effect a retreat during the night. The morning beheld the victors again in advance. At Vifford they met General Yorck, who, having vainly called upon Sacken to fall back without fighting, had now moved forward to protect his retreat. He was charged and defeated, and both corps driven back in great confusion to Château-Thierry, where they were fortunate in finding shelter beyond the Marne.

And where now was the indefatigable Blücher while

his corps were thus routed in detail? Obliged, by the unexpected advance of hostile troops from Sezanne, to remove his head-quarters to Vertus, he had assembled the corps of Kleist and Capczewitch, and moved on to Bergere; but being without cavalry, was unable to ascertain the force which, under Marmont, opposed his farther progress; and for once the bold veteran tarried when he should have advanced.

Joined at last on the 13th by two regiments of cuirassiers and one of dragoons, and anxious to learn tidings of his corps, he immediately attacked Marmont at Etoges. The French gave way after slight resistance, and were again assailed on the following morning. Driven back with loss, they were vigorously pursued till beyond Vauchamp, where fresh forces took them up, and obliged the Prussian advanced-guard to retrograde in its turn: and prisoners announced that Napoleon, having defeated Yorck and Sacken and been reinforced by Marshal M'Donald, had arrived with all his forces to the assistance of Marmont.

Such, indeed, was the case; and the position of Blücher, exposed with only 15,000 infantry and 1600 cavalry to the attacks of a whole army flushed with victory, and having nearly 10,000 cavalry in their ranks, appeared almost desperate. The gallant soldier trusted, however, that his fall, if such were to be his fate, would ensure victory to the cause; and that Schwarzenberg, if not following on Napoleon's traces, would seize the unprotected capital now placed completely within his reach by the Emperor's absence. But this energy was not in the character of the Prince's leading; and the noble army of Silesia, that by the valour of its chief and the splendour of its actions might be said to have brought the Allies to the very gates of Paris, was now abandoned in

its utmost need; left without aid, where neither courage nor conduct seemed capable of ensuring safety.

Napoleon having, by the victories already mentioned, secured Paris against any immediate attack of the Silesian army, was actually on his return to the Seine when Blücher's untimely advance gave him a welcome opportunity of striking a blow at this formidable adversary.

The morning of the 14th beheld his whole army moving down upon the Allies, who, unable to confront such superior numbers in the open country, could only attempt a retreat which seemed equally hopeless.

Formed in squares, the gallant band commenced their dangerous march. Their feeble cavalry was soon thrown, and forced to seek shelter between the masses of infantry, who remained unshaken in their compact array. As day wore, the French brought infantry and artillery into action; but with as little success. The fire of grape and musketry told fearfully in the closely-serried ranks of the brave, but it neither shook their courage nor their order; and their guns though few, and their fire though given only at the intervals of halting, replied fast and well to that of the assailants. And never was manly courage more nobly displayed than in Blücher's conduct on this trying day. Riding along the front line of squares, his firm and composed manner exerted a wonderful influence on the spirits of the soldiers. Wherever danger was greatest, there his voice was heard; and his commanding—almost monumental figure, unbent by the weight of years, was the first that caught the eye, when the sulphury vapour of battle passed away; and many, awed by his calmness, thought him anxious to find death rather than survive the destruction which threatened his army: for the march, though performed in perfect order, was slow and tardy, as the Russians

retired by alternate lines; one line of squares halting till the other passed through the intervals, took post, and fronted. Double time was thus required; while a large body of French cavalry, estimated at 6000 men, were seen moving slowly round the left flank of the Allies, with the evident intention of interposing between them and the forest of Etoges, which, if gained, promised to shelter them from farther pursuit.

Day was closing fast, and under constant losses the retiring columns had arrived within less than a mile of the forest of safety, when the whole mass of hostile cavalry was seen drawn up before them. Ruin now appeared inevitable, and many would, perchance, have yielded; but no such dastard thought was here. The horsemen came on, and circling round the small and diminished band of allied infantry, charged upon them from every quarter. Loud rose the shout of *Vive l'Empereur* as the countless squadrons rolled their clumsy weight against the squares: but louder still pealed the volleying musketry, as the fiery flashes gleamed quick and fiercely through the darkening air: some horsemen fell, the many paused, till, exposed to the continued storm of shot, they recoiled in broken masses from the compact and steady columns that advanced in proportion as their foemen gave ground. Charge after charge was rolled back in this manner; the feebly-trained cavalry never venturing to strike home, or break in upon their formidable enemies: nor ventured the thousands even to pass through the intervals of the exhausted columns which now served as passages for the artillery. Guns were moved rapidly from the rear to the front of the retiring masses; and round and grape, sent rattling over the plain, opened a road for the infantry-squares, who, unbroken and unvanquished, but diminished by a third of their number, gained the tangled

wood that sheltered them from farther pursuit. Seven dismounted guns remained in possession of the French, who had not taken a single one sword in hand!

Even to the last, the want of subordination was nearly proving fatal to the Allies. General Udom had been ordered to maintain the wood of Etoges with the remains of Olsufiew's corps; but some French infantry having reached it by a more direct road than the one which the retiring troops were following, and the Russian commander dreading a repetition of the combat of Champ-Aubert, abandoned his post without fighting, and thus endangered the safety of the army by an error the very reverse of the one committed by his previous superior, who fought when he should have retired. Every page of military history shows us how much depends in war on the character of individual officers; and yet with this knowledge so clearly traced out before us, we still see military rank sold in England for money! On the present occasion, the General's disobedience of orders led to no serious disaster; for the troops, who had withstood a whole army, soon recovered the wood and village of Etoges, though not without the loss of some gallant men, slain in consequence of the misconduct of a superior.

No action of modern times displays in so striking a manner as this combat of Vauchamp, the utter feebleness of modern tactics. Thirty thousand men, brave and gallant soldiers, assailed 15,000 infantry on open plain, and were totally unable to crush them! Both parties were trained alike, and whatever was effected was effected by firing. The French cavalry, ignorant of the real strength of cavalry action, hardly attempted to break in upon regularly-formed infantry; while the French musket-and-bayonet-armed infantry considered their weapons as weapons only of distant combat, and made

not a single effort to close with their slowly retiring enemies. It was a full confession, that modern infantry only fire and never close in hand-to-hand combat. The battle of Vauchamp adds another proof to the many furnished in this Memoir, of Napoleon's inability to combine the action of cavalry and infantry. The Allied infantry, isolated on the open plain, was assailable at all points: horse and foot, aided even by artillery, might have attacked any of the retiring columns; and the most zealous defenders of the musket-and-bayonet system of tactics, never pretend even that infantry so situated offer efficient resistance.

But no such attack was made; and Napoleon proved himself not only incapable of crushing an inferior enemy placed within his reach, but of following up the victories he had so wonderfully achieved. Forgetting altogether that Blücher was the impelling spirit of the whole invading force, he neglected the fairest opportunity of destroying him; and instead of repeating his blows against the Silesian army, which had lost 15,000 men and 24 pieces of artillery in these different actions, he allowed the Field-Marshal to rally his troops behind the Marne, and turned against the tardy Schwarzenberg, who, as we shall see presently, would not have gone far when deprived of the support he derived from the bold and daring genius of his colleague.

Nor did Napoleon make a better use of these victories in a diplomatic than in a military point of view. The Congress of Chatillon had assembled on the 4th of February; but as the terms offered him at Frankfort already differed widely from those tendered at Prague, so did the terms of Chatillon differ from those of Frankfort. The demands of the Allies had risen with the success of their arms; and instead of now offering France the limits of

the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, they required that all the conquests made since the commencement of the Revolution should be resigned. Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, conducted the negotiation on the part of Napoleon. In his first letter of instructions, dated Paris, 4th January, the Emperor having said that it would be degrading to France to be reduced within her ancient limits, concludes with the following words :—"If the nation supports me the enemy is only marching to his ruin. If fortune forsakes me my resolution is formed: I hold little by the throne, and will disgrace neither France nor myself by subscribing disgraceful conditions."

The more detailed instructions sent on the 19th January, still retain the same lofty tone. "In regard to the treaty," says M. La Bernardiere, "the Emperor desires me to inform your Excellency, that France *must* retain her natural limits without the least diminution of any kind. This is a *sine qua non* condition from which he will never depart." Here was a lofty tone, no doubt; but as it was not founded on lofty sentiments it only recoiled upon its author, who in less than one short month, on the first reverse, so readily deviated from these high pretensions. Writing from Troyes on the 5th February, after the battle of La Rothiére, he gives the ambassador full and entire power to sign any treaty that may save the capital and prevent a battle—"the last resource of the empire." The "honour" and "natural limits of France," so lately made a "*sine qua non*," are no longer mentioned, and the Emperor's indifference to the throne is not even alluded to; everything is to be sacrificed for the purpose of saving Paris. How is this sudden descent from his lofty pretensions to be reconciled with the "iron," "bronze," or "granite" character so many writers have ascribed to Napoleon?

Caulaincourt, instead of making immediate use of the powers entrusted to him, wavered and presented counterprojects ; but finding the Allies inflexible, he wrote to Prince Metternich on the 9th, signifying his intention of subscribing to these hard conditions, provided he could be assured of the immediate evacuation of the French territory. The treaty was almost looked upon as signed ; and might have been so, had not the rapid events of war outmarched the tardy progress of diplomacy. At the request of the Russian ambassador, the Congress adjourned for a few days. Before the conferences could be resumed, Napoleon's presumption had again marred his fortune ; for no sooner had victory smiled upon him in the plains of the Marne, than he recalls his full powers, and deceives his own ambassador by the most disgraceful falsehoods, even as he had deceived his Marshals and Generals after the battle of Dresden. In a despatch, dated 17th February, he informs Caulaincourt of his success against Blücher, and again insists on the terms proposed at Frankfort. "I have," he says, "taken between thirty and forty thousand prisoners ; two hundred pieces of artillery, and a number of Generals, and have destroyed several armies without almost striking a blow." As we shall soon see, he had not destroyed one army ; he had not taken above three or four thousand prisoners, and only captured twenty-four guns!—and yet he thus concludes his despatch :—"I am willing to cease hostilities, and allow the enemy to recross the frontier without further molestation, if they sign the preliminaries based on the proposition of Frankfort." At the end of this despatch, Napoleon added with his own hand, "Sign nothing! sign nothing!" words which, following on the base and unkingly falsehoods above quoted, very deservedly cost

him his crown. That he was fully justified in rising in his demands with the success of his arms, none will deny; for he certainly stood on better ground after the victory of Montmirail than he had done after the defeat of La Rothiére. But it was only by intimidating the Allies, by breaking their hopes of victory, not by deceiving his own ambassador, that better terms could be obtained, and this was not effected by the rhodomontades addressed to Caulaincourt; on the contrary, these ignoble statements only imposed upon the French negotiator, who, misled by such unworthy fables,—believing his country's arms to have achieved decisive advantages, persisted in demanding unattainable terms, till the time appointed for the duration of the Congress had passed away.

CHAPTER II.

NAPOLEON RETURNS TO THE SEINE, AND DRIVES BACK THE ADVANCED CORPS OF THE GRAND ARMY: SCHWARZENBERG CALLS BLUCHER TO HIS AID: NAPOLEON AT TROYES: BLUCHER AGAIN SEPARATES FROM THE GRAND ARMY, WHICH CONTINUES TO RETIRE. COMBAT OF CRAONE, AND BATTLE OF LAON: RUIN OF NAPOLEON'S AFFAIRS: HE TAKES RHEIMS, AND ATTACKS THE GRAND ARMY AT ARCIS-SUR-AUBE: THROWS HIMSELF IN THE REAR OF THE ALLIES, WHO UNITE THEIR FORCES AND ADVANCE UPON PARIS: COMBATS OF FERE CHAMPENOISE: BATTLE UNDER THE WALLS OF PARIS, WHICH SURRENDERS TO THE ALLIES.

Prince Schwarzenberg had derived little advantage from the absence of Napoleon. He had indeed forced the passage of the Seine, and pushed on small parties as far as Fontainbleau; but instead of profiting by this success, he had only crept on to Nangis with his right wing, and still occupied with his 120,000 men, a line extending from that point by Montereau to Sens on the Yonne; thus presenting in some measure his right flank to the enemy, and fronting towards the west, a quarter whence no mortal foe could well be expected to arrive.

On the 16th February, Napoleon returning already from his victorious expedition to the Marne, joined the Marshals at Guignes; the troops from Vauchamp were following in rapid strides by Meaux; and twenty thousand men from the army of Spain arriving at the same time,

he proceeded on the following morning to attack the enemy. They were already in retreat; Count Wittgenstein's position at Nangis having appeared hazardous to the cautious Generalissimo, that officer was falling back on Provins, when his rear-guard under General Pahlen was charged and defeated with considerable loss. The advanced-guard of Marshal Wrede's corps shared the same fate; and on the 18th, the whole of the French army, amounting now to 60,000 men, rolled on towards the banks of the Seine. The soldiers, though greatly exhausted by fatigue, yet marching as it might be said from victory to victory, gathered strength from the animating spirit awakened by their dazzling success.

Nor was this gallant spirit allowed to slumber; blow followed blow in rapid succession; and on the 18th, the Prince of Wurtemberg was assailed at Montereau, and defeated with the loss of more than 2000 men. In this action, the results of which are extravagantly exaggerated by French writers, Napoleon is said to have pointed some of the guns himself, and as the artillerymen, anxious for his safety, desired him to withdraw, he replied in a jesting tone,—"Never fear, my lads, the bullet destined to kill me has not yet been cast."

During these brief operations round Nangis and Montereau, we find the Emperor assailing Marshal Victor and some of the Generals in very harsh and, we might say, very vulgar terms,—indicating a state of manners and feeling not very creditable to the Imperial host. Thibaudeau, speaking of the transactions, says distinctly that the "Empire"—the reign of the very man he lauds so extravagantly—"had undermined the energy of all, and that nothing was done where Napoleon was not present in person." The historian forgets, like the many who repeat these assertions, that the Emperor had pro-

moted these officers, and was employing them in the high stations in which their misconduct is said to have been committed; and that the selection of such unfit persons, when all ranks of the French army were certain to furnish plenty of officers of talent and gallantry, reflects but little credit on the discernment of the absolute sovereign who placed them in their responsible situations.

Schwarzenberg, intimidated by these reverses, oppressed, as we find from his letters, by the dread of the responsibility which would devolve upon him should any personal misfortune befall the sovereigns, beat in retreat, and called upon Blücher for assistance. It was his intention, he said, to concentrate his forces behind Troyes, and accept a battle if before the 23d the Silesian army could aid him with 30,000 men. Blücher had reformed his corps behind the Marne; and having been joined by Langeron's troops, now replied in a manner worthy of his high character: "He should arrive," he said, "with 53,000 men and 300 guns, and be at Mery-sur-Seine ready for battle on the 22d." It was a gallant promise for one who had been defeated only seven days before, and was as gallantly performed as it was given; and when Napoleon, following his success, reached Mery on the 22d, he was surprised to find himself engaged, not with the troops of Schwarzenberg, but with a division of the Silesian army, who defended their post against him. At first he refused to believe this; but when it was confirmed to him, he declared, as Baron Fain tells us, "that Blücher, convinced of his inferiority by the events of Vauchamp and Montmirail, would only follow the retreat of the main army, and not engage in a new contest with him." We quote the trivial incident as we have another of the same nature to record; both showing how little Napoleon had learned from the reverses of

the late campaigns, how unable he was to appreciate the character of his adversaries, and how constantly he forgot that he had no longer the Macks and the Boulieus' of his early wars to contend against.

But Blücher's advance, though it surprised Napoleon, could not overcome the apprehensions of Schwarzenberg. Intelligence had arrived from the south, announcing that Marshal Augereau, having assembled 20,000 men at Lyons, had obliged General Bubna to retire towards the frontiers of Switzerland; and the Generalissimo, forgetting that the real object of the war lay close in his front, thought only of the danger of seeing his left flank turned by Dijon and Langres. At a council of the sovereigns, held at Troyes on the 23d, it was resolved therefore to despatch 30,000 men to the aid of Bubna, to retire with the main army as far as Langres, and apply to Napoleon for a suspension of arms! It was in vain that Blücher, who was almost frantic on the occasion, remonstrated against this fatal resolution, and offered to fight the battle with his own troops, provided the Grand Army would act as a reserve. Schwarzenberg remained inflexible; and it was again left to Napoleon to mar his own fortune by the presumption with which his late success had inspired him.

He seems at this time to have entertained strong hopes of detaching Austria from the coalition. And though he acceded to the proposal for an armistice, and sent his aide-de-camp, General Flahaut, to meet the allied commissioners at Lusigny, the terms he demanded, and which required that the line of demarcation should be drawn from Antwerp to Lyons and Genoa, were deemed so extravagant that the negotiation led, and could lead, to no satisfactory result.

Some correspondence that passed between the Empress

Marie Louise and her father, furnished him with the opportunity of addressing a private communication to the Emperor Francis; for whose aid he made the most brilliant offers, tempting him even with Italy and part of Poland. The answer which, by order of his master, Metternich sent to this communication, is noble and dignified.

After informing Caulaincourt that the letter cannot be acted upon, but shall—as any other private communication addressed to their cabinet during the negotiation—be looked upon as strictly confidential, he proceeds thus:—"The conduct of my sovereign is, and will continue to be consistent as his character; for his principles are beyond the influence of time and circumstances. They were the same during the period of adversity, and will remain so after the events now in progress shall have replaced Europe in the only position which can ensure peace and tranquillity. The Emperor engaged in this war without enmity, and continues it without resentment; for on the day on which he gave his daughter to the prince who then governed Europe, he ceased to consider him as a personal enemy. The events of the contest have changed the position of all parties; and if, under these altered circumstances, the Emperor Napoleon will listen to the voice of reason, abandon his previous line of policy, and seek to found his glory on the happiness of a great people, the Emperor will again look back with satisfaction to the day when he bestowed upon him the child of his affections. If, on the other hand, any fatal delusion should still blind the Emperor Napoleon to the wishes of his people and of Europe, his Majesty will be forced to deplore the fate of his daughter, but without deviating from the course which duty has imposed upon him."

The Austrian minister was at the head-quarters of the sovereigns, and took no direct share in the negotiations at Chatillon, but carried on a private and very friendly correspondence with Caulaincourt. In these letters, which reflect the highest credit on the prince's head and heart, he repeatedly warns the Duke of Vicenza of the danger to which Napoleon exposes himself by delaying to accept the terms offered: "No one," he says, "and least of all Austria, entertains any intentions hostile to the Imperial dynasty; but he will not answer for the consequences, as feelings very inimical to the Emperor are gathering in many quarters;" and he concludes one of his letters by observing, in answer to some of Caulaincourt's flourishing state-papers, "that events are too strongly marked, and of too important a character, to be influenced by romances composed in favour of the Emperor Napoleon." At a later period he writes:

"You know our sentiments here; for I have written to you with perfect frankness, and with the most sincere desire of terminating this fatal war, and the dangers that threaten France. It is still in your master's power to make peace; but it may not be so long: and the throne of Louis XIV., with the acquisitions of Louis XV., form surely too brilliant a stake to be risked on a single card."

From Paris the tidings were as unpromising as possible. The Baron de St Agnan, sent on a special mission by the ministers who had not been dazzled by the late victories, assured the Emperor that "from the capital to the frontier the discouragement was universal, and that peace was the rallying cry with all ranks in the capital as well as in the provinces." M. De La Valette, the director of the posts, in a hasty note, expressed himself still more strongly:—"There is not a moment to be

lost," he said, "if the capital is to be saved; the cause of the stranger is hourly gaining strength, and the danger is at its height." The very Council of Ministers, to whom the Emperor had submitted the terms demanded by the Allies, had voted for their acceptance.

Nor could the speech addressed by Talleyrand to the minister of police himself fail to be reported. "Well!" said that wily politician to General Savary, "here then is the end of all this approaching: is not that your opinion also? By my faith, it is losing a fine game! Only see what results the persevering folly of a set of dunces will produce! By Jove! the Emperor is to be pitied; but will not be so; for his obstinacy in keeping his strange set of counsellors about him has no rational motive: it is mere weakness, unaccountable in a man like him. Only think what a fall in history; to give his name to adventures instead of giving it to his age! I cannot help grieving when I think of it. And now what is to be done? It is not for every one to allow himself to be buried beneath the ruins of this edifice. Well, we shall see what will happen. The Emperor, instead of insulting me, would have done better had he formed a juster estimate of his advisers. He would have seen that such friends are sometimes more dangerous than the enemy. I wonder what he would have said of others who should have reduced him to his present condition?" Before the opening of the campaign, Napoleon had offered the ministry of foreign affairs to Talleyrand; who, foreseeing "the end that was approaching," had declined it; and the Emperor, suspecting the fidelity of the very man he proposed to employ, expressed, after leaving Paris, regret at not having caused him to be arrested. This speech would hardly fail therefore to reach him.

These representations produced, however, no effect upon

him. After the battle of Montmirail, he had exultingly declared "that he was nearer Munich than the Allies were to Paris;" and he now seemed inclined to act on the idle belief. Some hostilities committed at this time by the peasantry against the foreign troops, led him also, perhaps, to anticipate a rising *en masse* in his favour, and a more brilliant termination of the war than could at that moment be effected by negotiations. The constant march and countermarch of large armies within a small district of country, had exhausted the supplies; and the soldiers, arriving late in their camps and quarters, unaccompanied by a well-regulated commissariat, were forced to search the villages for provisions; and in doing so, both parties committed too many acts of outrage and violence, the usual consequence of such a mode of requisition. These disorders, generally charged against the Allies, were by no means confined to them; and an order issued by Napoleon, accusing his troops with the commission of the most atrocious crimes in their own country, shows that they were as guilty as the "vengeful" Prussians and "savage Tartars."* Houses and entire villages were pulled down to serve for fuel, others were destroyed during the actions; and the wretched

* Some trifling military duty caused the writer of this Memoir to be sent to Vertus in Champagne shortly after the capture of Paris in 1815. He, therefore, travelled through the very country which had been the seat of war, and heard from the villagers a good many anecdotes of the events which had passed in their neighbourhood; and it was highly gratifying to him, who was in his English uniform, to hear the good conduct of English soldiers the theme of universal praise. No English troops had ever approached those districts of France; but fame had made known their behaviour even among their enemies. "*On dit que les Anglais sont de bons enfans, qu'ils ne prennent rien, et ne font du mal a personne,*" were words that greeted his ear in almost every house he entered during his journey.

peasantry, forced to seek shelter with their little property in the recesses of woods and forests, formed themselves into bands to protect their lurking-places ; and on some occasions, ventured to attack couriers and small detached parties of the Allies. A few light companies were sent against them ; and this *guerilla* war which raised the hopes of Napoleon, proved altogether insignificant, and produced in reality not the slightest effect upon the progress of the operation. But the Emperor could not, and perhaps would not, see this : elate with the hopes of returning fortune, he advanced to Troyes, which was attacked with all the callous recklessness for which his military operations are distinguished. The ancient and extensive works of the city were not in condition to stand a regular siege ; but they had been newly palisaded, and were fully equal to resist an unprepared assault. The French approached the place on the afternoon of the 23d, and immediately summoned it to surrender. General Wrede, who commanded the Allied rear-guard, declared in reply, that he would not withdraw his troops till eight o'clock on the following morning, and it was for them to decide whether they would endanger the safety of a flourishing city by forcibly attempting to obtain an earlier entrance.

Notwithstanding this declaration, batteries were opened against the works. The fire was returned, and the suburbs that sheltered the assailants were soon in flames. At ten o'clock at night, a breach having been effected, an assault was given, but repulsed. Still the attack continued : at eleven o'clock a second assault was attempted, and having also been foiled, was repeated an hour afterwards with as little success as before, when all farther operations were suspended. These sanguinary combats, the destruction of a French suburb, and the

danger to which a flourishing city was exposed by such needless and wanton assaults, are mentioned here, not only as characteristic of Napoleon's unfeeling recklessness, but because they have been most shamefully passed over by French writers, who have actually had the effrontery to praise the Emperor's humanity in refraining to attack the town!

On the 24th, Napoleon entered Troyes, and immediately proceeded to acts fully worthy of the conduct which had marked the previous night. During the occupation of the city by the Allies, some French gentlemen had applied to the Emperor Alexander to restore the Bourbons. The Czar told them that the Allied powers had no intention to interfere with the internal affairs of France, or to impose any particular government on the country, and warned them, too truly indeed, of the dangers to which their hasty conduct might expose them. No sooner had the French recovered Troyes, than the Emperor, informed of the circumstance, caused the parties to be searched for: all had fled except M. de Gouard, who was arrested, condemned by a military commission, and immediately executed.

This act of needless severity was followed by a series of decrees, resembling in spirit those issued by the National Convention during the Reign of Terror. All able-bodied Frenchmen were commanded to take arms and assail the enemy: the insurrection was to be instantaneous and universal, and the punishment of death was denounced against all magistrates, mayors, and civil functionaries, who delayed compliance with the decree. These commands were even to extend to districts occupied by the enemy; and public authorities were ordered to raise conscripts under the very banners of the Allies, and where Imperial power had entirely ceased! In thus

attempting to imitate the example of Robespierre, Napoleon forgot that he no longer possessed the demagogue's power: he forgot, above all, that he had denounced and executed as brigands, Italian, Spanish, and Egyptian insurgents who had taken arms in defence of their country: he forgot that he doomed the gallant Hoffer to death, caused the brave followers of Schill to be shot, and put a price upon the head of the noble Chastelear: he no longer remembered that he had given up Pavia to all the horrors of military execution, laid waste entire districts of Spain, and ordered the midnight butcheries in the prisons of Cairo, that excited the disgust even of the brutal tools of his cruelty. But though Napoleon forgot these deeds of blood and violence, history must record them, and must appeal to the very proclamation which called upon the French people to take arms against the Allies, as proofs furnished by the declaration of their author, that they were so many deeds of foul, black, and ruthless murder. But his hours of sway were already numbered; and while he was issuing Jacobinical decrees, the military movement which was to strike him to the ground was already in full progress.

Blücher, perfectly certain that a retreat to Langres would ultimately lead the Grand Army, which was in the lowest possible spirits, to the very frontier, resolved to give the cause another chance of victory, and submitted to the sovereigns the plan which, as we shall see, brought the campaign to a successful termination. Two corps which had belonged to the army of the Crown Prince of Sweden,—the one under General Bülow, the other under General Wizingerode,—were at this time advancing from the Netherlands towards the scene of action. Blücher proposed, if these forces were placed under his command, to give up his line of communica-

tion by Nancy, march to the north, rally the two corps, before the French could interpose and prevent the junction;—and having thus formed an army of 90,000 men, advance on Paris, or act according to circumstances: he felt confident, he said, that Napoleon would discontinue the pursuit of the Grand Army as soon as he should discover the proposed movement. There was a strong party at head-quarters hostile to the commander of the Silesian army, who strove to counteract this project as they had done all his other plans; but on on the present occasion their efforts were fruitless, the monarchs as well as the Prince Generalissimo, fully approved of the expedition, which was actually in progress before it was officially sanctioned.

On the 24th, Blücher commenced his march, and driving Marmont from Sezanne, crossed the Marne at La-Férte-sous-Jouare, and advanced to the very gates of Meaux.

But as the capital was not the immediate object of the movement, and as the attempt to strike a blow at Marshals Marmont and Mortier failed, in consequence of the ability with which they manœuvred, the Field-Marshal turned to the right and continued his march to the north, intending to assemble all his forces before giving battle to Napoleon, who was now in full pursuit of the Silesian army.

The Emperor, informed on the 26th of Blücher's departure, and fearing, from the direction of his march, that this indefatigable adversary was moving on Paris, resigned to Marshals M'Donald and Victor the task of following Schwarzenberg, and immediately started with the main body of his forces on the traces of the Prussian Field-Marshal. We think we shall be able to show that this was the greatest of the many errors committed

by Napoleon during the course of the campaign; for Schwarzenberg, having detached 30,000 men under General Bianchi and the Prince of Homburg to reinforce General Bubna, was not at this moment much stronger than the French themselves, and might, as we shall see, have been struck at with a fair prospect of success. But if Napoleon's march to the north was ill-judged, it was rapidly executed: failing to overtake his adversary at the passage of the Marne, he struck into the high road at Château-Thierry, and reached Fismes on the 4th, the day after the Prussian Field-Marshal had crossed the Aisne at Soisson, and effected the junction of all his corps.

It has been usual for historians, repeating the French bulletins, to assert that the surrender of Soisson saved Blücher from destruction; as it enabled him to pass the Aisne, and join Bülow and Wizingerode on the right bank, instead of fighting Napoleon and his marshals single-handed on the left bank, with the river and a fortified city in his rear. Nothing can be more foolish than these assertions. Soisson, surrounded by the remains of old works, was totally unable to resist the 50,000 men of Bülow and Wizingerode, well provided with artillery. The Aisne is, besides, a river over which a bridge may be thrown in a few hours, and the Silesian army had fifty Russian pontons in their train, and Bülow had another train which he had captured at La Ferre. Above all, the Bridge of Missy, within a few miles of Soisson, was still standing, and in perfect repair. The road by Fismes and Berry-au-Bac was also perfectly open; and the baggage of the army sent by that road crossed the river in safety. And as Napoleon only crossed the Marne at Château-Thierry on the 3d, he was still two ordinary marches, or at least one very long

march in rear of Blücher, who crossed the Aisne on the same day. Only the upholders of Napoleon's fame could venture on assertions such as those we have here exposed. It may also be right to mention, that the retreat across the Aisne was a mere measure of precaution, and not of necessity. Blücher intended to fight in the strong position he occupied on the Ourque ; and had ordered General Bülow and Wizingerode to join him ; but knowing, from fatal experience, how independent such commanders often deemed themselves, he resolved at the last moment to secure the junction of the army by a retrograde movement, which nothing could impede.

The march to the Aisne, which placed Blücher at the head of a hundred thousand men, threw Napoleon into a situation whence all the idle tales uttered respecting the surrender of Soisson were not likely to extricate him. His cause was now indeed desperate, and the whole fabric of his power was falling rapidly together. In Italy, Eugene was defeated and driven across the Mincio. In the south of France, the Duke of Wellington had forced the *Payes de Gaves*, and defeated Marshal Soult at Orthez, after a succession of brilliant movements. Bordeaux, captured by the British, had hoisted the white flag, and received the Duke of Angoulême with enthusiastic acclamations. The Comte d'Artois was at Vessoul, and in the West the Royalist party were gathering head, and the reins of the Imperial government losing force in proportion. The very capital, the main seat of his power, seemed to be escaping from his grasp: the Royalist party, at the head of which were Talleyrand, De Pradt, Chateaubriand, and the Duke of Dalberg, was hourly gaining strength ; and the probable end of the Imperial regime made a subject of open speculation, even under the eyes of Napoleon's agents.

A general lassitude pervaded all ranks and classes; the fanaticism of liberty had been long extinct, crushed by Republican tyranny and Imperial despotism; and the people, tired of a twenty years' war, were naturally unwilling to shed their blood for the kings and princes of the Napoleon dynasty. There was no patriot energy, and the attempts made to rouse the enthusiasm of the nation were of the most unfortunate description. The trains of ragged and half-famished prisoners marched and, as the evil-disposed said, countermarched, along the Boulevards and through the principal streets of the capital, excited no martial ardour, and only awakened the sympathy of the generous and humane, who supplied the sufferers with food, and sometimes with clothing, as they passed in melancholy procession.

The songs, poems, and theatrical representations, intended to fire the general enthusiasm of the people, produced a still worse effect: the subjects were chosen from the times of chivalry, from the annals of the French kings, and offended the so-called patriots, who asked whether Republican France had no history capable of furnishing themes fit to awaken the patriotism of the nation.

Adversity had paralyzed all authority; even the police was powerless, and men spoke out openly and without reserve against the Emperor and the Imperial authorities. From the provinces the ministers received the most discouraging intelligence; in their confidential letters the extraordinary commissions reported that all was hopeless, and that peace was the general cry, and that imprecations against the government were loud and universal. The women took, it seems, a very prominent part in these hostile demonstrations: wives, mothers, sisters, affianced brides, all exclaimed loudly against a

reign of endless war and sanguinary conscriptions. In the capital, the formation of the National Guard had given considerable power to the middling and commercial classes; who, from the first, evinced great zeal for the maintenance of order and the preservation of property, but very little for the security of the Imperial throne.

Recruits and conscripts came slowly to the ranks; some of the Guards of Honour had actually mutinied; and the army in the field was evidently the last stay on which the Emperor could rest his fortunes: and as those fortunes were desperate, desperate also was the strife in which the small and diminished band of gallant soldiers was to be risked.

From the valley of the Seine, tidings announced that Schwarzenberg, having learned the absence of Napoleon, had immediately countermarched, attacked, and defeated the marshals in successive actions, at Bar-sur-Aube, Bar-sur-Seine, and Labrousels. The road to Troyes and to Paris was thus open to the invaders; and it was evident that nothing could save Napoleon from utter ruin but a decisive victory over Blücher, a victory that should completely paralyze the Silesian army, terrify the other forces, or enable the Emperor again to hurl his legions, strengthened by the moral force of success, against the slow and over cautious Generalissimo.

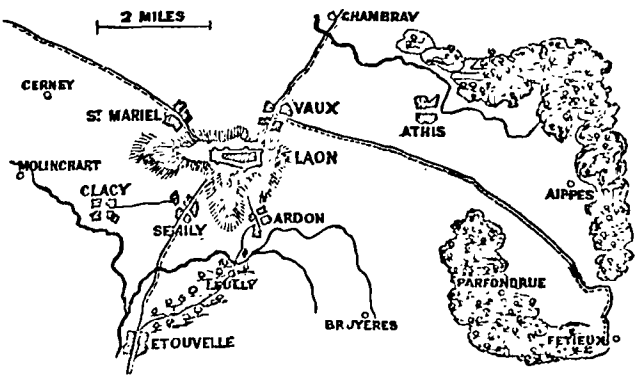
But from the very first, fortune boded him no good on the banks of the Aisne. His troops were defeated in an attempt to retake Soisson; and though the passage of the river was effected without opposition at Berry-au-Bac, the success led only to more signal disaster. Blücher, fully aware of his adversary's situation, certain that he was forced to seek a battle, resolved to receive the onset at Laon; but to aim a blow at him

during his advance to the scene of combat, which, if fortune favoured, might be attended with great results.

Between Berry-au-Bac and Laon, and above the village of Craone, is a long, narrow, elevated plateau, flanked by difficult ravines, and offering a succession of remarkably strong positions for what may be considered a numerous rear-guard. Here Blücher posted Count Woronzow with the infantry of Wizingerode's corps; the troops of Yorck and Sacken were placed in support, and General Wizingerode himself, with ten thousand cavalry, and forty pieces of horse artillery, was ordered to make a night march by the Fetieux road, and arrive in position to fall upon the rear of the enemy, as soon as he should be engaged with the troops on the plateau. Everything promised the best success: Napoleon attacked Woronzow's troops with all his usual impetuosity; the defence of the Russians was brave and masterly; and, favoured by the ground, they held the position against vastly superior numbers, and constantly renewed attacks. Tidings arriving, however, that Wizingerode had not only lost time in the execution of his movement but the direct road also, he was recalled, and the infantry ordered to withdraw from the field they had so gallantly maintained. The action had been sanguinary in the extreme: on the side of the Russians 4700 men had fallen; and the French had, by their own confession, left 8000 killed and wounded on the field: an enormous loss for an army of less than sixty thousand men about to assail an enemy double its own strength.

Napoleon slept the night after the action, and when his guardian spirits had evidently forsaken him, at an inn called the Guardian Angel, and advanced on the 9th to the attack of the Allied Army, assembled in the position of Laon.

This position, which events have caused to be considered strong, is the last perhaps that mere theoretical strategists would have termed so, and stands probably alone of its kind in the annals of warfare. The town of Laon, surrounded by old ramparts, occupies the whole summit of a hill situated in an undulating plain of some leagues in extent. The height of the eminence is from



three to four hundred feet, and it rises in an angular elevation of from fifteen to thirty degrees; at its foot are four villages that may be looked upon as distant suburbs; those of St Marcel and Vaux to the north, Semily and Ardon to the south. As the central position of an army, the town of Laon may be considered impregnable; but the wings, though resting securely with their inward flanks upon the hill, are fairly open to attack along their whole front, and the outward flanks are totally unsupported, or what the French term completely *en l'air*. In the present case, this was not deemed objectionable, as the Allied Army was particularly strong in cavalry, and as Blücher intended to manœuvre round the hill as

a pivot, till a favourable opportunity for assuming the offensive should present itself. Napoleon's method of attack facilitated this plan in the most extraordinary manner.

A heavy mist covered the plain of Laon on the morning of the 9th; and the French, availing themselves of its shelter, attacked and carried the villages of Ardon and Semily, situated at the very foot of the hill, but were soon dispossessed of their conquest; and the day having cleared towards eleven o'clock, it was observed that they did not display any great force in the immediate front of the position: whence it was inferred that the main attack was to be made from the Fetieux road, along which the march of strong columns had already been reported. This was Marmont's corps advancing from the south, while Napoleon's columns were pointing from the west. There was thus a wide space between these two divisions of the army, which, under protection of the strong point of Laon, could be separately assailed at the pleasure of the Allies. It is almost impossible to conceive a plan of attack more injudicious, and more certain of leading to total defeat: and Blücher was surely not the man before whom such a want of ordinary judgment could be displayed with impunity. The ground on the left being more open and better adapted for offensive movements, the Allied commander resolved to threaten Napoleon's left, and strike a decisive blow at Marmont's corps, as soon as it should come fairly within arm's length.

General Wasiltschikow was directed, therefore, to turn the left wing of the French with a corps of cavalry, some light infantry, and horse artillery, and thus call away their attention from the real point of attack. This succeeded perfectly. Considerable masses were advanced to confront him, a distant cannonade ensued, and as

evening closed, he was to give way and fall back slowly behind the main position. While the French were pressing back these troops, and defending the broken ground near Ardon at the foot of the hill, Marmont's corps had come into action; but had evidently engaged only with a view of obtaining a favourable position for joining in the general attack intended on the following morning; and at nightfall the firing ceased along the whole front.

Blücher had no sooner satisfied himself from the tardy movements of Napoleon's divisions, that no offensive movement was then intended, than he gave orders for the reserves stationed behind the hill, under the command of Langeron and Sacken, to move to the left, and support the corps of Yorck and Kleist, forming with the cavalry of Ziethen, the left wing of the army. All these troops had directions to fall on, whether by night or day, the moment the reserves reached the appointed ground. It was dark when they arrived, and the firing had already ceased along the line; but no sooner was their presence reported than the Prussian corps advanced firmly and silently to the attack. Not a shot was fired. The surprise was complete; the French were preparing their bivouacs; combat there was none, it was a total rout: and such was the panic, and so wild the flight, that Marshal Marmont only succeeded in rallying the remains of his corps at Fismes, twenty miles from the scene of action. Fifty guns, all the artillery of the vanquished, as well as all their baggage, fell into the hands of the conquerors; two thousand five hundred prisoners were brought in, a great many more had been taken, but easily escaped, as little attention was paid to them during the night pursuit. This brilliant, and as it proved decisive success, cost the Allies less than two hundred men in killed and wounded!

Sprengel, whose work we have already quoted, gives the following account of the share which his regiment took in the action. Day was closing, and the troops were awaiting orders to fall on.

"We were soon commanded to mount; but all firing, shouting, singing, or sounding of trumpets, was strictly interdicted. Our road lay through the village of Athis; and the flames having gradually subsided, we traversed it without difficulty, and formed at a gallop on the field of the previous battle. Along the wide plain before us, the countless fires of the French bivouacs were seen to extend as far as the distant hills in our front. Silently but compactly formed, our two regiments now threw themselves in full career upon the foe. Videttes and picquets were galloped over before a shot was fired; a regiment of dismounted *chasseurs* met a similar fate.

"In the woods to our right, bugle sound proclaimed the advance of the infantry under the chivalrous Prince William, and nerved every arm to exertion. At this moment a regiment of half-mounted cuirassiers attempted to arrest our progress in front of their camp, but was completely rode down, though not till a few pistol-shots had been fired at us. This was the signal for the French trumpets to sound, and for their drums to beat. The wild alarm spread quickly through the night, and soon reached the distant hills of Fetieux, where lay the head-quarters of the Marshal.

"Gathering to the signal, the enemy were now endeavouring to form, and two regiments of dismounted cavalry stood in our front. But our trumpets were ordered to sound the charge, and with a loud hurrah we dashed at them, completely dispersing through the night all who escaped the sword.

"The rout now became universal, and even the fugi-

tives lent us good aid; for they rushed upon their comrades who were attempting to form, and carried them along with them in their flight. Helmets, cuirasses, swords, pistols, carbines, were all thrown away to facilitate escape.

"In the woods, Prince William's bugles still sounded the advance, our trumpets replied in merry style, nor were French alarms wanting; but we heard nothing more of the pretty country-dance tunes to which they usually treated us when skirmishing.

"Our very horses seemed to partake of the animating spirit of victory, and were not to be exhausted: and sweeping every thing before us, we reached Fetieux, where the Marshal's head-quarters had been established, but found it deserted; for the lion had fled his lair at our approach.

"We halted on the hills beyond the village. An hour had not elapsed since we left our camp, and it was already more than seven miles in our rear. We had not lost a single man of the regiment, nor had a single horse fallen during our charge; but the field of battle was strewn with arms, armour, and prize-horses. Only two hundred of the enemy remained dead on the ground; but we had, without knowing it, captured forty-four pieces of artillery. The regiments that followed us found several French corps, which we had passed unobserved in our advance, drawn up in line; but all dispersed at the first onset, leaving many thousand prisoners in the hands of the victors. That was indeed a battle!"

Napoleon was preparing to mount his horse at four o'clock in the morning, for the purpose of commencing his general attack, when two dragoons who had escaped from the action, brought the tidings of Marmont's defeat. The Emperor's position was now perilous in the

extreme. In his front, a superior enemy strongly posted, and on his right victorious corps ready to assail his flank and to interrupt his line of retreat and communication. Total ruin threatened him; and before midnight, dispositions for the front and flank attacks had already been issued from the Prussian head-quarters.

Napoleon's escape from the dangerous situation in which he was placed by the result of the battle of Laon, is generally ascribed to the bold and resolute countenance he displayed, and to his firmness in maintaining his ground and threatening posture during the following day. To some extent this may be true; but the main cause of his not being attacked was the sudden illness of Marshal Blücher. The toils and constant excitement occasioned by so active a winter campaign, might of themselves have told on the seventy years of the veteran commander; but other circumstances also had tended to affect him. The want of harmony between the old Silesian army and the newly-joined corps had given him much trouble; and the inattention, or as many said, direct disobedience of General Wizingerode, which caused the failure of the well projected movement at Craone, afflicted him deeply. He was already unwell on the 9th, though the excitement of battle supported him; but victory achieved, his strength gave way, and on the morning of the 10th he was unable to rise, and a violent inflammation of the eyes almost deprived him of sight. The army had, therefore, no commander; and though victory had brought harmony in its train, it had not changed the pacific character said to distinguish all deliberative military bodies: and when, therefore, the general officers assembled at the Marshal's quarters next morning to congratulate him on his success, and to receive farther orders for the operations of the day, found that he could

not lead, all thoughts of offensive movements vanished as by mutual accord. The flanking corps were ordered to halt, and the French allowed to retire without molestation from the brink of the precipice into which the slightest blow might have hurled them. After some fighting round the villages, which could effect nothing, and only cost the lives of brave men, they withdrew to Soisson, which the Allies had abandoned when they concentrated their forces at Laon, and where the Emperor gave his wearied and discouraged soldiers two days' rest, after the fatigues they had lately undergone. It was at this time that, in a fit of undignified fury, he ordered some Russian prisoners to be shot; an order which his defenders tell us was unfortunately carried into effect before it could be revoked. But what are we to say of the total want of mental control which could issue such an order under any circumstances? There are perhaps cases in which quarter may be refused to troops, but once granted, there are none which can justify its being deviated from: to slay a prisoner who on the faith of Christian civilization has surrendered his arms, is not only murder, but murder aggravated by treachery.

Napoleon had, indeed, escaped destruction at Laon; but beset on all sides, where was he now to seek for safety? If he returned to the Seine, he left Paris exposed to the attacks of the Silesian army; and to retain his position at Soisson was to encourage Schwarzenberg in his forward movement. At this moment, tidings arrived that a Russian corps under General St Priest had retaken Rheims; and as this force could not be considerable, he determined to march against it, as success, however unimportant in itself, might serve to revive the drooping spirits of his army, perhaps even of his party. St Priest, when informed of the advance

of Napoleon, refused to credit the report: he had prepared an entertainment for the 13th, and did not wish, it seems, to have it disturbed; but when the approach of the enemy could no longer be doubted, and the blow no longer evaded, he met the combat in gallant style. He was slain early in the battle, and his troops, oppressed by superior numbers, were driven from the city. St Priest was a Frenchman by birth, and Napoleon, always ready to deal in puerilities, declared in his extravagant and exaggerated account of the action, "that he had fallen by a shot fired from the same gun which killed General Moreau."

This unimportant victory did not mend the Emperor's situation; and as no military movement, promising any fair chance of success, could now be devised, he sent orders to Caulaincourt, who was still negotiating at Chatillon, to sign the treaty and accept the terms proposed by the Allies, "subject to the Emperor's approval;" but even these orders came too late. We have seen that after the victorious expedition to the Marne, Napoleon had directed Caulaincourt to insist on the terms offered at Frankfort, and to "sign nothing." The Ambassador, thus obliged to retract many of his former concessions, submitted projects to the Congress so completely at variance with the views which had formed the previous basis of the negotiations, that they were looked upon as only so many devices intended to gain time. The Allies took precautionary measures in consequence, and met these "romances in favour of Napoleon" by the treaty of Chaumont, according to which the four powers bound themselves to support their claims with four hundred and fifty thousand men, and not to lay down their arms till they had secured the principles for which they were contending. Fortified by this new

compact, the Plenipotentiaries gave in their ultimatum; demanding that France should return within her former boundaries, and restore all the conquests made since the commencement of the Revolution,—Napoleon resigning not only the power he had exercised in foreign countries, but consenting also to lay down the very titles under which it had been exercised. To this ultimatum the Allies demanded an explicit answer on or before the 10th of March. At the request of Caulaincourt, the term was afterwards extended to the 18th; and the French Plenipotentiary, not having then acceded to the conditions,—having, on the contrary, advanced the most extravagant counter-claims,—demanded Piedmont, Belgium, and the left bank of the Rhine for France, Westphalia for Jerome, the kingdom of Italy for Eugene Beauharnais, and dukedoms and principalities without end for the various members of the Bonaparte family; the Allies declared the negotiations at an end, and the Congress dissolved. Nothing now remained but to try the fate of arms once more; and Napoleon was already on the march to engage Schwarzenberg, when the Duke of Vicenza himself brought tidings of the complete failure of his mission.

The Emperor having given the army three days' rest at Rheims, and been reinforced by ten thousand men, five thousand from Paris, and an equal number drawn from the fortresses, took his march on the 17th towards the line by which the Grand Army was "dragging its slow length along." After achieving the victories already mentioned over the Emperor's lieutenants, the Prince Generalissimo had again occupied Troyes, where an eight days' halt was granted to the troops. The news of Blücher's success at Laon gave a renewed impulse to the forward movement, and Schwar-

zenberg crossed the Seine. Informed of Napoleon's advance, he engaged the Marshals on the 16th, and forced them back towards Provins; and having well calculated his movements, and evinced a degree of energy not before observed in his leading, he concentrated his troops near Troyes: and when the direction of the hostile march was decided, when it was known that Napoleon had crossed the Aube at Plancey with part of his army, and was advancing to Arcis by both banks of the stream, he instantly moved towards the same point, determined to accept battle if offered. It was the first appearance of boldness displayed by Schwarzenberg during the whole of the campaign.

What led Napoleon to expect that he should find the Grand Allied Army with its right flank totally unguarded, and scattered along the road from Brienne to Nogeant, we have no means of knowing, though such seems to have been the case. Driving some of the hostile light troops before him, he advanced carelessly from Arcis at the head of his cavalry, till coming suddenly on the corps of Marshal Wrede and the Prince of Wirtemberg, the French horse were charged, thrown, and pursued to the verge of the town. Here their infantry had taken post, and though vigorously attacked, darkness closed on the combat before they could be dislodged. The morning of the 21st saw both armies drawn up for battle. Oudinot and M'Donald had arrived with their corps during the night; and Schwarzenberg had concentrated his swarming host that, formed in a long line of contiguous columns, now advanced to the onset.

The action commenced, but though sharply fought on various points, was not of long duration. Finding that he had a whole army before him, Napoleon broke off the combat, retired across the river, and having

destroyed the bridges, directed his march on Vitry. The operation was difficult, and attended with considerable loss; but the pursuit was not pressed, and it was not till the following day, when the victors poured their multitudes over the plains beyond the Aube, that the French reserve artillery was captured.

The conduct of both commanders was on this occasion greatly at variance with their ordinary character. Schwarzenberg, about to be attacked, concentrated his army and resolved to accept the combat, though his superiority over the enemy was far less than it had been in February, when he declined a battle near the same ground. Napoleon's conduct again seems totally incomprehensible. He brought about 35,000 men with him from Rheims; M'Donald and Oudinot had together about 25,000 more; thus giving him on the 21st an army of between fifty and sixty thousand men; while Schwarzenberg, after forming his Army of the South, and detaching large parties along the road, had not then more than 80,000 men with him; and these certainly not present in the battle-field. This was no doubt a great superiority; but it was not an overwhelming one; not one against which success is absolutely impossible. It was not equal to the superiority against which the Emperor had fought at Leipzig and Laon; and yet here, when it seemed that nothing but a decisive victory could redeem his fortunes and save him from destruction, he declined the combat, retired from the field, threw himself into the rear of the enemy, and placed Paris completely at their mercy!

While these events were passing on the Aube, personal illness, the want of supplies for his troops, and the suspicious conduct of Bernadotte, retained Blücher in painful inactivity at Laon. When the Silesian army marched to the Aisne, and relinquished their line of communi-

cation by Nancy, they established a new one through the Netherlands and the former Prussian provinces on the left bank of the Rhine, which, by a decision of the Allied monarchs, were to be restored to their legitimate sovereign. But no sooner had Bernadotte reached Liege, than he not only declared his intention of proceeding no farther, but prevented Prussian officers from exercising the necessary authority for the execution of their orders in the provinces of Cleves and Guelders. His Royal Highness was at this time carrying on some petty intrigue, with the hope, as many think, of succeeding Napoleon on the throne of France, and expected, perhaps, to gain favour with the Parisians by taking these provinces of the Grand Empire under his protection. Such strange proceedings interfered not only with Blücher's line of communication, but awakened in the old Hussar the suspicions he had always entertained of Bernadotte's sincerity, and induced him to pause and take measures of precaution against any possible change of policy on the part of his Royal Highness. The causes of delay once removed, operations were instantly resumed with all the characteristic energy which had distinguished the Silesian army.

On the 19th the corps were assembled; on the following day the Aisne was passed, and Marmont assailed and driven from Berry-au-Bac. A letter from Napoleon to the Empress Marie Louise having been intercepted, and containing information that he was marching on St Dizier, and intended to throw himself into the rear of the Allies, General Wizingerode was sent after him with eight thousand cavalry, some horse-artillery, and a body of light infantry; while with the rest of the army the Field-Marshal moved on towards Rheims and Chalons, intending to place himself in communication with

Schwarzenberg; who, having crossed the Aube, was following slowly on the traces of the retiring French. The junction of the two armies was no sooner effected than it was unanimously resolved to march directly on Paris, Wizingerode being directed to follow the Emperor in his march, and represent his own corps as the advanced guard of the Grand Army. The honour of suggesting the movement on Paris has been claimed by all parties. Danilofsky claims the suggestion for the Emperor Alexander, English writers claim it for Lord Castlereagh, Prussians for the King of Prussia, and Austrians for Schwarzenberg; a proof, perhaps, that all were equally convinced of the expediency of the measure.

Napoleon's eccentric march after the battle of Arcis, exposed several corps of his army to great peril and serious loss. One was entirely destroyed, and others might have shared the same fate, had not Schwarzenberg's tardy motions prevented him from taking advantage of the want of skill displayed by his adversary. The corps of Mortier and Marmont, ordered to join the Emperor, found themselves, on arriving at Sommesous, in the midst of the Allied armies, and liable to be crushed by the overwhelming forces by which they were nearly encircled. Cut off from the main body of their countrymen, a rapid retreat towards Paris could alone avert their ruin. It was quickly resolved upon, but the pursuers were as quickly at hand; and, overtaken by the Allied cavalry near Fère-Champenoise, the Marshals were obliged to halt and stand to combat. Fiercely charged by swarms of horsemen, exposed to the fire of a constantly augmenting artillery that rent the closely formed masses asunder, driven from position to position, and about to be assailed by the Allied infantry already arriving on the field, they were on the point of being

crushed, notwithstanding their bold resistance, when the unexpected sound of a heavy and sustained cannonade, rolling on from the northward, suddenly arrested the pressure of attack.

The march of Napoleon had left another French corps exposed to destruction in the open plains of Champagne. General Pactho had arrived at Etoges with 8000 men and 16 guns, escorting a large convoy of stores and provisions which he was conducting to the Emperor, when he learned that the whole of the Silesian army was in his front. He immediately struck to the right, intending to join the Marshals, but was discovered by the van of Blücher's cavalry, who were instantly ordered to pursue and attack him. Weak at first, the Allies could do little more than harass and cannonade the French, who conducted their march with rare skill and bravery; but the assailants gathering strength as the day wore on, the pressure on Pactho's gallant band became heavier and heavier. Still no impression was made; the French, though principally composed of young conscripts, falling fast under the shot of rapidly augmenting foes, charged in front, flank, and rear, by Russian and Prussian squadrons, continued their march in firm and compact order. Cheered by the sound of artillery from Fère-Champenoise, which told that friends were near; and cheering by their fire the troops of the Marshals who fancied the roar of artillery to proceed from the guns of the Emperor's army advancing to their relief, both parties continued to foil every charge directed against them. While the Prince of Wirtemberg, who commanded the troops engaged with the corps of Marmont and Mortier, uncertain of the number and description of the forces moving down towards his right flank, slackened his efforts, and

despatched part of his cavalry and artillery to observe and check the progress of these new and threatening adversaries.

Tracing with their blood every step of the march, Pactho's gallant band had reached the neighbourhood of Fère-Champenoise, when the Prince of Wirtemberg's troops appeared in their front and opened a fire upon them. Checked, but undismayed, they now turned to the right, expecting to reach Petit Morin and the marshes of St Gonde, where the nature of the ground promised to secure them from the charging horsemen. "Already the descry—Is yon the bank? Away, 'tis lined by many a hostile rank." A large force of cavalry and artillery, detached from Blücher's army, have reached the field, and now add to the fire poured in upon these truly brave and valiant men.

From every elevation, from every swell of rising ground, shot and shells plunged into the midst of the French who, from six squares, were now driven into one huge unshapely mass, incapable of all farther orderly and compact progress, but not incapable of resistance. In vain they were called upon to surrender: the hopeless combat was long and obstinately maintained; and it was only when the tearing fire had made wide openings in the mass, and when many soldiers had thrown down their arms in despair, that the Allied cavalry broke and dispersed them. None escaped: all who had not fallen became captives.

The Marshals turned the breathing-time gained by Pactho's gallant resistance to the best possible account. Their ranks were reformed; the wounded and the baggage sent to the rear; and a storm of hail having brought the day to an early close, they commenced the retreat, followed only by the Allied light cavalry.

The French lost 15,000 men and 60 guns in these sanguinary combats; but fatal as the day was to their cause, it is one of which the nation may be justly proud. And rich as their annals are in brilliant deeds of arms, they cannot boast an action of war distinguished for nobler soldiership than was displayed by the young conscripts who fought under the gallant Pactho at Fère-Champenoise.

Still sweeping before them the small French detachments, confusedly scattered between the Seine and the Marne, the Allied troops moved rapidly with exulting spirits towards Paris. Blücher followed the road by Château-Thierry. Schwarzenberg marched by Coulommiers: Meaux was fixed upon as the rallying point of the two armies; both met there on the 28th, and on the following evening the whole of the mighty host encamped in sight of the French capital.

Gloom and anxiety had for some days pervaded the city. All attempts of the government and police to conceal the real state of affairs had proved unavailing, and melancholy trains of wounded soldiers, crowds of peasants flying with their herds and the remnants of their few moveables, told too plainly that danger was approaching. Numbers of the wealthy classes had already fled with their families, and the citizens were occupied in concealing their most valuable effects. On the 28th, when the Allies reached Meaux, all the shops were closed, and in the evening a council was held at the Tuileries to deliberate on the expediency of the Empress's retiring to Blois, or remaining at Paris and sharing the fate of the capital. A great majority of the council voted for her stay; but the deliberation seems to have been a mere mockery; for no sooner had the votes been taken, than Joseph Bonaparte produced

a letter from his brother, containing positive orders that in case the enemy approached Paris, the Empress and the King of Rome, and all the ministers and high functionaries of state, should retire to Blois, and there establish the seat of government. Such measures had no doubt been resorted to at periods of trouble during the time of the Valois; but it was a strange delusion on the part of Napoleon to suppose that, as affairs then stood, a revolutionary government in France could any where support itself independently of Paris. Capefigue says, and we suspect very justly, that his monarchical predilections, and his anxious desire to imitate in every thing the kings of the ancient race, led him to adopt this singular resolution. The departure of the Empress and the members of government, tended naturally to augment the gloom and discouragement which pervaded the city. A proclamation issued by Joseph Bonaparte, and calling on the citizens to arm for the defence of the capital, the protection of its wealth, treasures, and monuments, and assuring them that "the hostile column which had advanced to Meaux was closely followed by the Emperor, and would be speedily destroyed," produced little effect, as the people had long ceased to feel confidence in the declarations of government.

Nothing indeed shows more clearly the state of public opinion than the parting words addressed by General Savary the Minister of Police, to M. Pasquier the Prefect: "Well, M. Pasquier," he said with a sort of military frankness, "here then is the end of all this: I have long foreseen it, and have never attempted to disguise it from the Emperor; I now believe that he is lost. A new authority is about to arise; you will naturally be called upon to take a part, and I have only to recommend you to watch over the tranquillity of

Paris ; for in twenty-four hours the city will be besieged and taken : there are no resources capable of resisting such masses. For my own part, I go to Blois, to perform my duty to the last : it will not be of long duration."

These words from a high functionary, told plainly that the Imperial regime was at an end ; but no one could yet foresee by what authority it would be replaced. The Allies had repeatedly declared that they only made war on Napoleon, and had no wish to impose a government on France ; and none of the parties that divided the country had sufficient strength to stand without their aid. Bordeaux, when taken by the English, had indeed hoisted the white flag, and received the Duke of Angoulême with acclamations ; but greatly as this event tended to strengthen the Bourbon cause, the example had not been followed ; in various parts, royalist committees were formed, but little effect was produced. The friendly occupation of Lyons by the Austrians, led to no demonstration in favour of the exiled family ; and though Royalist agents had been sent from Paris to encourage the Allies in their advance on the capital, the party remained perfectly tranquil, while invading myriads were encamped beneath the walls.

In the evening, Count Parr, Prince Schwarzenberg's aid-de-camp, arrived at the barriers with a flag of truce, and proffered terms of capitulation. These were rejected by the Marshals, who, relying on the bravery of their troops and the strength of the position, resolved to try the fate of battle. The following proclamation, issued in the name of the Allied Sovereigns, preceded the onset, and many copies had already found their way into the city before the attack commenced :—

"INHABITANTS OF PARIS!

"The Allied Armies are under your walls. A lasting peace is the object of their march to the capital of France. For twenty years Europe has been deluged with blood and tears. Every attempt to terminate these calamities has been unavailing, because there exists in the government which oppresses you an insurmountable obstacle to peace. Who among you is not convinced of this truth? The Allied Sovereigns are merely desirous of finding in France a salutary government which may cement a friendly union among all nations. And it is, under present circumstances, the duty of the city of Paris to hasten by its efforts the pacification of the world. We wait the expression of your opinion with a degree of impatience proportioned to the importance of the occasion,—proportioned to the mighty consequences which must result from your determination. Declare it, and you shall at once find defenders in the armies before your walls. Parisians! the state of France, the proceedings at Bordeaux, the friendly occupation of Lyons, are known to you. In these examples, and no where else, is to be found the end of foreign war and civil discord. The tranquillity of your city will be the object of the measures the Allies offer to concert along with the authorities ranking highest in public estimation. These are the sentiments which Europe, arrayed before your walls, now addresses to you. Hasten, therefore, to justify the confidence reposed in your wisdom and patriotism."

This address, signed by Prince Schwarzenberg, an Austrian Field-Marshal, was, if not an absolute declaration against Napoleon, at least an invitation to the people of Paris to shake off the yoke of the Imperial

regime, and call for another government; and could not fail, in the situation of affairs, to produce a very considerable effect, as it seemed clearly to indicate that even the Emperor Francis had abandoned the cause of his son-in-law.

Paris is encircled towards the north-east by a succession of hills admirably adapted for defence. Commencing at Montmartre on the left, they extend by La Villette, Belville, and Romainville to Montreuil, and the Buttes de Chaumont on the right; and, as they fall abruptly towards the east, are covered with villas, villages, parks, gardens, churches, and strongly-walled cemeteries, and, intersected on many points by deep roads and ravines, they present a front of remarkable strength. But the flanks of this position are as weak as the front is strong; for both may be turned with perfect facility, the left by St Ouen and Clichy, the right by Charenton and the wood of Vincennes. The small town of St Denis, situated on the Seine in front of the extreme left and surrounded by old walls, is no doubt, like the castle of Vincennes, secure against a mere off-handed attack; but neither of these posts can, as the result proved, impede the march of columns round the flanks of the position described. Except a few *tambours*, constructed of boards and erected in front of the barriers, no works had been raised for the protection of the capital. Napoleon had rejected the plan submitted to him by a committee of engineer officers appointed for the purpose of preparing a project of defence, and the rapid march of events had prevented any other from being adopted. Paris could only depend, therefore, on the skill and bravery of the troops, amounting, with 1200 men of the National Guard, and 300 scholars of the Polytechnic School who volunteered

their services beyond the barrier, to about 40,000 men; the defenders had 154 pieces of artillery at their disposal.*

The Allies, on their part, were not so strong as was generally supposed. Bülow remained in observation before Soisson; Wrede and Sacken were posted at Meaux to defend the passage of the Marne, in case Napoleon should advance to Paris on the traces of the Grand Army; and swarms of light troops extending far to the rear watched the motion of the French, prepared to give notice of any attempt to interfere with the operations against the capital. These detachments exceeded 64,000 men, and left the Generalissimo exactly 100,000 disposable for the decisive attack now to be made.

The day of retribution, destined to see Paris bend beneath the arms of victorious foes, had arrived at last; and the fatal spirit which for twenty years had caused Europe to be deluged with blood, was now to be quenched in the very cradle in which it had been nursed. Nor was it to perish without an effort. French bravery, though arrayed in a worthless cause, prepared to maintain its gallant character even to the last; and the bril-

* The corps of Mortier and Marmont, . . . 23,486
30 depôt battalions, forming the garrison of Paris, 9,000
Cavalry depôt, ... 1,000
Depôt of the Guards, ... 4,000
Veteran Artillery, ... 480
Volunteers of the Polytechnic School, . . 300
Volunteers of the National Guard, . . . 1,200

39,466

The National Guard took no active share in the defence. About 20,000 men of different depôts, stationed within one or two marches of Paris, might have been called in to aid the defence of the city, had any ordinary ability presided over the general arrangement.

liant beams which the rising sun of the 31st of March cast on the domes and spires of the capital—as if pointing out to the Allies the splendid prize for which they were now to contend—fell at the same time on a stern band of defenders, determined to hazard another blow for the throne of their revolutionary chieftain. All were at their post. King Joseph with his staff, and attended by a numerous suite of officers, had established his head-quarters at Montmartre, whence a considerable part of the field can be observed; but everything was yet tranquil in the hostile camp. In the city, anxiety seemed to preserve silence, and many still hoped that hostilities would be avoided: some expected that the arrival of the Emperor would call away the enemy; others, that an arrangement would prevent a battle from being fought beneath the walls of inviolate Paris. All had their speculation, and all were of a peaceful character; when towards six o'clock, the first shots heard in the direction of Pantin and Romainville dispelled the flattering illusions. The action once commenced, thickened rapidly; the roar of artillery was soon added to the rattling of musketry; and before an hour had elapsed, a storm of fire rolling round the defences told that a stern and stubborn combat was engaged.

The details of the battle belong not to our subject. Here it is sufficient to say, that the centre of the Allies commenced the attack many hours before the Silesian army on the right, the corps of the Hereditary Prince of Wirtemberg and General Giulay on the left, could take a share in the assault. Time and distance had been miscalculated, or other errors, not explained by the authority we are following,* had been committed, and heavy losses were sustained in consequence: for the

* The Austrian Military Journal, 1840.

French fought with the most heroic gallantry, and evinced the most admirable skill in defence of their formidable position.

When the Generalissimo learned that hours would elapse before the wings of the army could reach the field, it was deliberated whether the action should not be delayed till noon; but information arriving that Napoleon had countermarched, and was advancing towards the capital, it was resolved to give the enemy no respite, no encouragement by delay, and to persevere in the difficult contest. At eleven o'clock, the heads of Blücher's columns appeared in the plain, and with them came the certainty of conquest. Part directed their march on La Chapelle and Villette; others, sweeping round by St Ouen and Clichy, prepared to turn the left of the position; while a small detachment remained to mask the town of St Denis. King Joseph, now fearing that his personal retreat would be endangered, sent authority to the Marshals to enter into terms with the enemy, as soon as resistance should prove to be unavailing, and then left the field and took the road to Blois. He had not long departed before General Dejean, Napoleon's aid-de-camp, reached the city. This officer had been despatched from Doulevant to announce the speedy arrival of the Emperor; and brought an order for the Marshals to propose an armistice, on the grounds that negotiations certain of leading to a peace had been renewed with the Emperor of Austria. But the time when objects could be gained by such puerile devices had long past away; and Schwarzenberg replied that he could enter into no negotiation, except for the surrender of the city. Closer and closer, therefore, grew the onset; for the French still defended their ground with dauntless bravery. But the hour of defeat had struck: the

left wing of the Allies, forcing their passage through the wood of Vincennes, advanced towards Charenton; on the right, the Prussians attacked La Villette and Chapelle; and Barclay de Tolly, who had paused in the centre till the flanking corps should come fairly into action, renewed the onset with redoubled vigour. Height after height was carried in rapid succession; the defenders were driven within the barriers, which were in danger of being forced; and at three o'clock howitzers, placed on Mount Louis and Belville, sent the first retributive shells into the capital of France. As it was now evident that all farther resistance was vain, Marmont despatched an officer with a flag of truce, to request an armistice and propose a capitulation. The terms were soon agreed upon, and with the capture of Montmartre the firing ceased along the whole line, and the setting sun beheld Paris, whence proclamations of eternal war against thrones had so often gone forth, now humbled at the feet of victorious kings.

The loss of the Allies in the stubborn action amounted to 9000 men, that of the French to little more than half the number. As it is usual to say a good deal of the heroism displayed by the National Guard and the scholars of the Polytechnic School, it may be well to add, that the former had five men put *hors-de-combat*, and the latter three wounded.

While the Allies were thus beating down the defences of the capital, Napoleon was hastening with rapid strides to its relief. He had engaged and defeated General Wizingerode near St Diziers on the 27th; and having learned from prisoners that he was followed only by a corps of cavalry, and that the Grand Army were advancing on Paris, he instantly proclaimed the glaring errors he had committed, in attempting to operate on their line

of communication, and hurried by forced marches towards Troyes, which he reached on the evening of the 29th, having left the roads covered with exhausted, fainting, and worn-out stragglers. Finding his course clear, he there threw himself into a carriage, and attended by a few followers, proceeded post-haste towards Paris. At Villeneuve l'Archeveque he mounted on horseback and galloped on to Fontainbleau, where he arrived late in the afternoon, and exchanged the saddle for a carriage, and again set out on his journey. At every stage the information he received became more and more alarming: Paris had been attacked, the firing had been distinctly heard, but had long ceased, and the result could hardly be doubtful: the Emperor's anxiety became intense, and perspiration burst in large drops from his brow. It was ten o'clock at night, and he was changing horses at the *Cour de France*, a post-house twelve miles from the capital, when some straggling soldiers, not knowing who was in the carriage, called out that there was "no need for haste, as Paris had capitulated." "These men are mad," said Napoleon; "bring me an officer." At this moment General Belliard, who had left the field in conformity with the Convention, came up at the head of his cavalry: "What means this?" exclaimed the Emperor, leaping from his carriage. "Why here with your cavalry, Belliard? Where are the enemy? Where Marmont and Mortier?" Though informed of the events of the day, he insisted at first on continuing his journey, and called repeatedly for his carriage. "Come," he said, "we must to Paris; follow me with your cavalry; nothing goes right when I am away: they do nothing but blunder. You should have held out longer; you should have raised Paris: they cannot love the Cossacks; they would surely have defended their walls. I burned the pavement; my

horses were as swift as the wind. I asked them only to hold out twenty-four hours. Miserable wretches; they had my orders, and knew that on the 2d of April I would be here at the head of 70,000 men! Go! go! I see every one has lost his senses. This comes of employing fools and cowards." With exclamations of this sort, and calling repeatedly for his carriage, he was still hurrying along the Paris road when they met General Curial at the head of the infantry, who confirmed all that Belliard had said; and assured him that in going to Paris he was rushing on death or captivity. These statements, and the pressing entreaties of his officers, then induced him to return to the *Cour de France*, and abandon a resolution—or momentary impulse rather—which, judging from the nature of his conversation, was certainly not very firmly fixed, nor founded on any very clear or decided view or intention. His words and behaviour at this moment of trial, one of the most important of his life, have of course been highly extolled, though they are evidently those of a weak and wavering man who wishes to receive an impulse he feels himself incapable of giving. He talks much and does nothing: he talks of the speed of his journey; of the cowardice and folly of his Lieutenants; but makes no effort to remedy their fault; while nothing that could possibly have been maintained had yet in fact been lost. The heights round Paris had been carried after the most heroic defence possible; but the city was still unoccupied by the Allies, and in possession of Mortier's troops, who only retired at day-break. It was still in Napoleon's power, therefore, to enter the capital and try his own fortune in a renewed battle. If the troops who had evacuated the town continued to look upon him as their Emperor, they would have returned at his orders; for in all times, sovereigns have taken upon

themselves to set aside conventions and capitulations concluded by their subordinates. Napoleon had done so before, and the Allies very lately, in refusing to ratify the capitulations of Dresden and Dantzig; and he would have used little hesitation on this point had it suited him to advance. But as in all situations of real emergency, he was here also found without firmness and decision, and here also turned his back on the last chance, slight as it may have been, of preserving his crown. Where brave myriads were to be thrust forward, Napoleon never hesitated; but where personal action, character, and efforts, could alone remedy disasters, and stem the tide of adverse fortune, there he was constantly wanting.

The supposition that the open city of Paris, a city "of balls, operas, and pleasure," could have held out three days longer, is not even deserving a word of refutation; and the value of Napoleon's rhapsody cannot be better estimated than by the fact, that the troops who defended the city—the corps of Marmont and Mortier—were there *contrary to his orders*, having, as we have seen, been prevented from joining him on the march to St Diziers!

Instead, therefore, of trying measures of bold despair, he despatched Caulaincourt to the head-quarters of the Allies with full powers to accept not only the terms of Chatillon, but to surrender fortresses and offer the payment of war contributions. Having given this most humiliating order, he dashed away the tear that gathered in his eye, directed the troops to take post at Essone, and returned to Fontainbleau! Capefigue, who is our informant on this last point, adds that Napoleon, acting by the advice of others, committed a great error in offering these concessions to the enemy, as they must infallibly have

ruined him in the estimation of all parties had they been accepted. This inference is probably very just; but it is equally certain that no great man, no man endued with feelings of honour or high talents, could have followed such advice: for every noble sentiment of the heart must have repelled the idea of sacrificing the interest of France to the interest of Napoleon, even as high talents would have shown the ruin certain to attend such undignified conduct. In addressing the Senate on the 30th March 1813, he declared that he "would not resign a single village of the Thirty-Second Military Division" —the district of the German Hanse Towns—"if the enemy were encamped at Montmartre." And now, when on the anniversary-day of that very speech, hostile banners were planted on those heights, he was ready to yield not only the foreign conquests of France, but French fortresses and French wealth also, merely that he might continue to wear, what he had himself termed "a degraded diadem." And yet there are historians who will speak of the pride, firmness, and granite character of this man!

As the capture of Paris may be looked upon as having terminated the war, we shall here, before resuming the thread of our narrative, offer a few strategical remarks on the events which led to this important victory.

The long and stubborn contest which Napoleon maintained with a small army against vastly superior forces, has excited universal admiration, and been looked upon as a proof of the highest military genius. We shall not deny that we think there is much to praise in his conduct during this campaign, though the merit has been overrated; while the errors committed, which more than outweigh the merit, have been entirely kept out of sight. Were we, in accordance with old pedantic

fashion, to consider the operations of the campaign abstractedly as only so many military movements performed with mechanical figures, we should certainly be forced to admit that Napoleon evinced the most transcendent skill. But when we take the moral forces into account, as they always must be in war, and recollect that the game was here played by a French army under Napoleon, long habituated to war and accustomed to victory, and deriving from those circumstances a vast degree of moral force which late events had not yet entirely destroyed; and that it was played on the other side by an Allied Army, composed of the troops of various nations, under Prince Schwarzenberg, we shall find that much of what seems the result of skill and genius on the French side, arose from the want of those qualities on the part of the Allies,—from the system of extreme caution which Schwarzenberg had laid down as the rule of his conduct, and which served not merely as a foil to the bolder actions of Napoleon, but naturally gave him great advantages also: for a commander who in the open plain will not fight a battle when his opponent seeks it, must necessarily make great sacrifices to effect his object.

The Prince laboured under heavy disadvantages: he fought against an adversary who for many years had been constantly victorious, and was still looked upon by numerous and influential parties at head-quarters, particularly by the Russians, as almost invincible in battle: the alarmists and diplomatists who besieged the sovereigns, augmented the strength of the French army in the most extravagant manner, and every hour of the day brought accounts of the pretended rising of the French people. The orders of the commander-in-chief were not very punctually obeyed by foreign officers who had

themselves commanded armies,—the defeats of Nangis and Montereau were owing to disobedience of orders,—and the dread, that in case of reverse, personal misfortune might befall the Sovereigns, pressed constantly on his spirit. It was this last consideration, and the belief that his communication and safe retreat were endangered at the moment which made him decline the intended battle near Troyes, after having been joined by the Silesian army. In a private letter, dated 23d February, he says :—" I have submitted to many reproaches, and have been made to bear a great deal, because I refused the proffered battle ; but I should not deserve the many benefits Providence has bestowed upon me, if I wanted courage to persevere in what I believe to be the right and proper course." The military commander will no doubt be blamed for this resolution ; but it is impossible to withhold praise from the man who persevered under such trying circumstances, particularly when we know that he was personally the bravest of the brave.

Let us now see how far Napoleon made the best use of the means at his disposal, and of the fair openings these circumstances gave him.

We have said that he commenced the operations of the campaign with only 78,000 men ; but at this very time, he had Suchet's army almost inactive on the frontiers of Spain. Another army, under Eugene Beauharnais, was attempting to carry on offensive operations in Italy ; and in the Netherlands twenty thousand men kept the field under General Maison. He had troops in Savoy, on the Rhone, and on the Yonne ; he had every where numerous forces, except on the vital point where his fate was to be decided.

The battle of La Rothiére was, we conceive, an error of the greatest magnitude ; for against such overwhelm-

ing numbers, victory could not be calculated upon with the least rational prospect of success. Had he delayed his battle, retired before the slow advance of his enemies, engaged and fought it ten or fourteen days later, under the walls of Paris, he might have had ninety thousand men present in the field instead of the fifty thousand he had at La Rothiére; for he would have been joined by M'Donald's corps—22,000 strong—and by at least 20,000 men of the new levies that arrived during the interval. True it is, that defeat would have lost him the capital; but the defeat of La Rothiére would have produced the same result had the Allies followed up their victory: and if they were slow and tardy even after that success, they would have been still more so had it never been achieved. And if Napoleon's Marshals could fight a battle under the walls of Paris with only 40,000, he could surely have fought one with more than double the number. General Clausewitz, who was probably with the army, and who makes the same remarks that we do here, seems to think that the battle of La Rothiére alone brought the Allies to Paris; as without that battle their dissensions would have arrested their progress long before they could have reached the capital. And Prince Schwarzenberg's message to Blücher, already quoted, seems fully to confirm this opinion.

Nor was this the last or greatest error committed. When the battles of Vauchamp, Montmirail, and Champ-Aubert, again gave his star the ascendant, fortune pointed a road to victory which every real judge of character and events would certainly have followed. By the defeat of his corps, Blücher sustained a loss equal to what defeat in a general action would have occasioned: his forces were separated, and were diminished by nearly 15,000 men; and it is not to be supposed that his army

could have escaped dispersion, or again made head beyond the Meuse, had he been vigorously pursued. It is true that this would have left the Paris road open to Schwarzenberg; but the state of affairs near Lyons had already brought the Generalissimo to a halt, by alarming him for the safety of his left flank. The defeat and continued pursuit of the Silesian army would have laid his right flank completely bare; and as Blücher formed, besides, the bold and impelling principle that gave the forward movement to the Allied mass, it is not to be believed that the cautious Schwarzenberg would have advanced, or tarried on the banks of the Seine, had his bold colleague been driven beyond the field of operations.

Napoleon's return from the Marne to the Seine is marked by great rapidity; but the partial advantages gained over Pahlen, Wrede, and the Prince of Wirtemberg, at Montereau,—victories that dazzled the conqueror and decided nothing,—can neither atone for the previous error, nor for the graver fault by which it was followed. Schwarzenberg alarmed, as we have seen, by the events near Lyons, was falling back with the avowed intention of retiring to Langres; and had Napoleon followed up his blows, continued the pursuit of the Grand Army, reduced by the large detachments sent to the Rhone to eighty or ninety thousand men, and completely broken in spirits,—few will believe that he might not have driven them back to the very frontiers of Switzerland. Nor was the danger of leaving the Silesian army behind so very great; for the Grand Army once in full retreat, messenger after messenger would have been sent to Blücher, commanding him to retire to the Rhine, and form the pivot on which it might lean with safety, in traversing Switzerland. "The whole host of strategists," says Clausewitz, "would have thought only of the

battle of Dresden, and of its dangerous consequences." Nor is this a mere conjecture; for the French having continued to press the rear-guard of the retiring host, Schwarzenberg already despatched pressing orders on the 25th, calling for the immediate return of his more daring colleague. Fortunately for the cause, Blücher did not receive the letters till Napoleon had abandoned the pursuit of the Grand Army, and removed the Generalissimo's apprehension.

But instead of taking fortune by the forelock, Napoleon no sooner hears of Blücher's march to the North, than relinquishing the pursuit of the Grand Army, he hurries after the more dangerous enemy, and allowing Schwarzenberg and his council of kings and strategists to recover from their panic and defeat his Marshals, he rushes with fifty thousand men against an army of double his strength, commanded by the ablest and most resolute of his adversaries! The battle of Laon was the consequence, and proved the levelling blow from which he never recovered; for his subsequent movements were only so many expiring efforts, undertaken without clear or well-defined ideas, and certain of leading to no satisfactory result. After the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, a retreat on Paris whence his resources were derived, and a concentration of the different corps under the walls of the capital, seemed, as far as we can now judge, to offer the best chance of averting destruction. Instead of following this simple plan, Napoleon projects and commences a march towards the frontier, with a view of throwing himself on the communication of the Allies: this was now, after victory had crowned their efforts on the Rhone, the Aube, and the Aisne, the worst measure that could possibly have been adopted; it was, in fact, a mere rhodomontade, which justly led to its author's

destruction. By relieving the troops blockaded in the fortresses of the Rhine, he also set free the more numerous investing forces of the Allies, and left the capital, with its resources and vast influence over the country, perfectly open to the attacks of the enemy. Considered as a mere feint to impose upon his antagonists, the movement is equally faulty ; for a feint which at the head of an army is certain to bring ruin when it does not deceive the enemy, is as much to be condemned as a feint which brings the fencer full on the enemy's sword if it fails to impose on the adversary. Indeed, Napoleon himself completely condemned the boasted operation, by instantly countermarching the moment he heard the Allies were advancing on Paris.

And as if this succession of faults had not been sufficient, the last we have to record surpasses all its predecessors by the total want of judgment and moral courage which it displays. Every messenger from Paris brought tidings of the doubtful disposition of the capital, and of the absence of all display of zeal for the Imperial cause. By Napoleon's orders, the Empress and the ministers would leave it on the approach of the enemy ; in the hour of danger the city would be without a government ; and the Emperor knowing this, continued for three days to accompany the march of the army, instead of hurrying with post-horses, through circuitous roads if necessary, to the capital, where his presence might have fixed the zeal of the wavering, repressed the exertions of hostile factions, and given strength, energy, and confidence to the defenders. But no : it was only on the morning of the 30th, the very day on which Paris capitulated, that he took post at Troyes ; and after three days' delay, arrived in the vicinity of the capital, to learn that his throne of power lay shivered in the dust.

Though the important events on the banks of the Seine necessarily absorb the principal interest attached to the campaign of 1814, it may be right here to say a few words of the actions that on other points of the great theatre of war closed this memorable contest.

In Italy, Eugene Beauharnais, after maintaining a gallant contest against the Austrians under Bellegarde, had been obliged to fall back behind the Mincio. A Neapolitan army under Murat, and an English force under Lord William Bentinck, also took the field in the north of the Peninsula; but dissensions between these new and ill-assorted Allies rendered their operations of little import; and the reduction of Genoa, captured by the British, proved the only valuable trophy of the campaign. By a subsequent convention, the French troops evacuated Italy, after having been for nearly twenty years in possession of the country. Previous to their departure, Eugene Beauharnais, who had vainly attempted to negotiate for himself at Chatillon, endeavoured to make the Lombards petition the Allied Sovereigns to place him on the throne of Milan; but he failed completely in his object: an indifferent illustration of the pretended attachment entertained by the people for his person and government. The world was tired, in fact, of French connexion and conscriptions.

In Flanders, an English army under Lord Lynedoch, had advanced to the gates of Antwerp, and, aided by the Prussian corps of Bülow, had erected batteries behind the Merxen Dyke, and endeavoured to destroy the fleet by shells and red-hot shot. The precautions taken by the French frustrated the attempt. The Prussians, refusing to tarry and aid an object of purely British interest,—and certainly a puerile one at such a moment,—marched into France, and the British withdrew

towards Breda. No effort was made to reduce the city, nor was there any force equal to such an undertaking; and the praise bestowed upon Carnot for what is termed the skilful and resolute defence of Antwerp, has been cheaply gained; as the fortress was neither attacked nor threatened. When afterwards surrendered at the peace, the works were not found in a state of preparation which could do much credit to any officer of skill and judgment.

Though little could be effected by the small and inefficient army assembled in Flanders, it must be confessed that they attempted at least one of the boldest and most extraordinary enterprises hazarded during the whole course of the war. This was nothing less than an attempt to carry the strong first-rate fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom by a nightly surprise. The assailants actually entered the works, and were for a time in possession of the ramparts; but several of the leaders—Generals Gore, Skerret, and Colonel Tarlton—having fallen, and a number of men having been lost in effecting the entrance, they were ultimately forced to abandon the prize. The officers of the garrison, perceiving at daybreak how small the number of assailants really was, that no reinforcements were at hand, resumed the offensive, and being the most numerous as well as the best concentrated, succeeded, after a sharp conflict, in driving the British with great loss from the works they had carried.

The attack on Bergen-op-Zoom is memorable, not only for the daring gallantry of the onset, and the skill with which it was planned and in part executed; but also for the valour and ability displayed by the defenders, who, far from losing courage by their first reverses, concentrated their forces with great judgment, and attacked

their scattered foes with superior numbers. The feebleness of the modern system of infantry tactics is also illustrated by this attack. The defenders relied principally for success on a battery of light field-pieces, which the men dragged rapidly from point to point, and which greatly added to the effect of the musketry. The British had nō guns, and though they made several so-called charges of bayonets, and attempted to take the French artillery, these onsets led, as usual, to nothing. One party rushed forward some forty or fifty yards, the other fell back in proportion, and the firing was again renewed. The soldier does not look upon his unhandy musket-shafted bayonet as a weapon of close combat; and a home charge followed up till the enemy is forced to fight, or driven fairly from the field of contest, is therefore totally unknown in modern war. Modern infantry act only by their fire; and sad it is, that British infantry, possessing so many high martial qualities, should be confined to a system of tactics, which leaves the best of those qualities—strength, energy, and activity—almost totally dormant, though by far the most likely to command success in battle.

In the south of France blood was unfortunately shed even after the war may be said to have terminated. On the 10th April, the Duke of Wellington attacked and carried the strong entrenched position occupied by Marshal Soult in front of Toulouse. The battle was very sanguinary; and it was long the fashion to accuse the French Marshal of having wantonly fought this action for the gratification of his own ambition, when already informed that the war had virtually ceased. It is now known, however, that Marshal Soult, though acquainted with the capture of Paris, was ignorant of the political changes that followed, and may therefore be acquitted of the charge brought against him.

The conduct of General Thevenot, Governor of Bayonne, is less easily defended. Informed by Lord Hopetoun, the commander of the British forces before Bayonne, of the events which had taken place, he sent an evasive answer, saying, "that they should hear from him on the subject before long;" and then followed up this unworthy reply by a nightly sally, which was only repulsed after seventeen hundred men had been killed and wounded, the greater number on the part of the French. There was nothing that could oblige the governor to receive and be guided by information his enemies had furnished; but in point of fact, he knew the information to be correct, the changes at Paris were known in the fortress, and no slaughter round the walls of Bayonne could possibly influence their results. History will accuse General Thevenot of having been influenced by the rancorous hatred of the British entertained by so many French officers, and with the desire of terminating the war by an exploit achieved against those hated enemies who had humbled the eagles of Napoleon, and been the first to convince the world that the French were not invincible. Though we may regret the enmity of valiant foes, their hatred will not affect the fame of an army that, in an unbroken succession of triumphs, marched from the shores of the Tagus to those of the Garonne, and there received from vanquished adversaries, and on hostile ground, the noblest tribute of praise ever conferred on invading forces. Writing from Bayonne, one of Napoleon's commissioners makes use of the following words:—"The English General's policy, and the good discipline he maintains, does us more harm than ten battles. Every peasant wishes to be under his protection." The avowal forms the best and fittest wreath for completing the crown of honour gained in so many victories.

CHAPTER III.

THE ALLIES AT PARIS: NAPOLEON AT FONTAINBLEAU. THE SENATE DEPOSE THE EMPEROR, WHO SIGNS HIS ABDICATION, AND RECEIVES THE ISLE OF ELBA IN SOVEREIGNTY. JOURNEY TO FREJUS: ARRIVAL, AND STAY AT ELBA.

At Bondi all was joy and exultation on the morning of the 31st March, when Caulaincourt arrived to negotiate for Napoleon. The head-quarters of the Sovereigns were thronged with deputies from the various municipal bodies, and from the National Guard of Paris, seeking protection for the city and its institutions. Political partisans, anxious to plead their views, were not wanting; and, according to Capefigue, even Talleyrand had paid Count Nesselrode a visit for the purpose of arranging measures with him. All these parties were well received; protection was promised to all; and if no political engagement was entered into, the Emperor Alexander had at least promised to take up his quarters at the hôtel of the Prince of Benevento, who was then looked upon as the chief of the Bourbon party: a circumstance that tended greatly to encourage the adherents of the exiled family. Napoleon's ambassador—the ambassador from the man who so lately "scourged and feasted kings"—was already a secondary person at Bondi, and easily perceived how greatly his position was altered;

and though the Czar received him with great courtesy, the brief audience and few words accorded, proved clearly that "the man of destiny" had fallen from his "high estate." "You see, my dear duke," said Alexander, "that we are very busy preparing for our entry into Paris: come to me in the evening, and we will talk over the object of your mission."

At an early hour in the morning, the Allied troops had taken possession of the barriers, and occupied the principal avenues leading to the city. Picquets of the Cossacks of the Guard were stationed at the corners of the principal streets. Vast multitudes thronged the Boulevards, in anxious and silent expectation of pending events. The Royalists alone were active. The leaders, a small band indeed, had early assembled in the Place Louis XV., whence, with Bourbon banners displayed, they proceeded along the principal streets, haranguing the people and National Guard; but though not interfered with by the police,—for all seemed to feel that the Imperial government was at an end,—they were listened to with such perfect indifference that many began to think their cause absolutely hopeless.

It was between ten and eleven o'clock when the procession began to enter the city. Light horsemen of the Russian Guard opened the march; at the head of the main column rode the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia; between them the good and gallant Schwarzenberg. They were attended by a numerous and splendid suite of General and staff officers, and military envoys from all the courts of Europe; then followed 35,000 men, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, the *élite* of the armies, in all the pride and circumstance of war and conquest. At first the multitude looked on in silent amazement; but the affability of the officers, above all,

the condescending manner of the Czar, dispelled any fear they might still entertain ; and shouts of " *Vive Alexander!*" began to be heard ; cries of " *Vive le Roi de Prusse!*" were soon added ; and as the march advanced, the friendly disposition of the multitude augmented ; persons of all ranks pressed closely round the sovereigns ; ladies waved white handkerchiefs from windows and balconies crowded with spectators. The shouts of welcome increased at every step. The conquerors were now hailed as liberators ; " *Vivent les Allies!*" " *Vivent nos liberateurs!*" sounded through the air, mingled at last with the long-forgotten cry of " *Vive le Roi!*" " *Vivent les Bourbons!*" The multitude seemed frantic with joy, and the enthusiastic reception of the Sovereigns and their troops in the capital of a vanquished enemy, surpassed any ever experienced by a victorious prince returning in triumph to the city of his fathers.

The Emperor Alexander had no sooner seen the troops file past on the Place Louis XV., than he repaired to the hôtel of Talleyrand, where, in the evening, a council was assembled to deliberate on the important step next to be taken, and on the best mode of turning the glorious victories achieved to an honourable and beneficial account. The parties present on this occasion besides the Sovereigns, were Prince Schwarzenberg, Prince Lichtenstein, the Duke of Dalberg, Count Pozzo di Borgo, a Corsican, and the personal enemy of Napoleon, Count Nesselrode, and Talleyrand. The points discussed were : I. The possibility, on sufficient guarantees, of a peace with Napoleon ; II. The plan of regency under Marie Louise ; and, III. The restoration of the Bourbons. The choice was not without difficulties. The first plan was easily dismissed ; as the reception of the Allies proved clearly that the power of Napoleon

was broken. The second seemed more likely to find favour, as promising to please the Emperor of Austria; but was finally rejected, as being, in fact, nothing more than a continuance of the Imperial regime under a different name. Against the restoration of the Bourbons, it was urged, that the nation at large had evinced no desire for their recall, and seemed to have almost forgotten them. This, Talleyrand said, was owing entirely to the Congress of Chatillon, and the negotiations carried on with Napoleon; introducing, at the same time, the Abbé de Pradt and Baron Louis, who fully confirmed the assertion. On being asked how he expected to obtain a declaration in favour of the exiled family, Talleyrand replied, that he was certain of the Senate; and that their vote would influence Paris, the example of which would be followed by all France.

Alexander having on this assurance taken the opinion of the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg, signed a declaration to the effect that "the Allies would treat no more with Napoleon Bonaparte, or with any member of his family." A proclamation was issued at the same time, calling on the Conservative Senate to assemble and form a provisional government, for the purpose of drawing up a constitution suitable to the wishes of the French people. This the Allies promised to guarantee; as it was their wish, they said, to see France "powerful, happy, and prosperous." A printer was ready in attendance; and before dark, this memorable decree was seen placarded in all the streets of Paris. The inconstant populace had not even waited for such a signal, and had been already engaged in destroying the emblems of the Imperial government; an attempt had even been made to pull down the statue of Napoleon from the summit of the column of Austerlitz, in the Place Vendome!

The decisive impulse thus given, events moved rapidly forward. Caulaincourt's zealous efforts in favour of his master could effect nothing after the declaration already noticed. On the 2d, he took his departure for Fontainbleau; having, however, received the assurance that Napoleon would be suitably provided for, and being still impressed with a belief that a regency under Marie Louise might be obtained. This had been a favourite idea of the men of the Revolution, who were hostile to the Emperor, and would willingly have been conceded at an earlier period; but it was now too late: and the boundless hatred of the Imperial government, which every where burst forth the moment a safe vent for its display was given, threw the nation into the arms of the long-forgotten Bourbons. How keen that hatred must have been, may be judged of from the simple fact, that though the Revolution had bribed supporters with all the vast property of the Church and the nobility, with nearly the whole of the territorial property of France, the holders of that wealth now forsook the representative of the great convulsion which had enriched them, and were ready, from mere detestation of their late ruler, to throw themselves into the arms of princes, the natural enemies of the Revolution, and from whose measures, the greatest danger to its institutions was to be apprehended.

' But the happiness of being relieved from the Imperial government outweighed every other consideration: the funds rose five per cent., and all other public securities in proportion, on the very day after the occupation of the capital; and wherever the Allied Sovereigns appeared in public, they were loudly cheered and hailed as liberators. From the first, officers of the Allied armies filled the public walks, theatres, and coffee-houses, and

mixed with the people as welcome guests rather than as conquering invaders.

The press, so long enslaved by Napoleon, took the most decided part against its oppressor ; and from every quarter injurious pamphlets, epigrams, and satires, now poured upon the fallen ruler. Madame De Staël had characterized him as " Robespierre on horseback ;" De Pradt had more wittily termed him " Jupiter Scapin ;" and these sayings were not forgotten. But by far the most vivid sensation was produced by Chateaubriand's tract of "Bonaparte and the Bourbons ;" thirty thousand copies of which are said to have been sold in two days.

In proportion as the popular hatred of the Emperor evinced itself, grew the boldness of his adversaries. On the 1st of April, the Municipal Council of Paris met and already declared the throne vacant; on the next day, the Conservative Senate formed a Provisional Government, and issued a decree, declaring, 1st, " That Napoleon Bonaparte had forfeited the throne and the right of inheritance established in his family ; 2d, That the people and army of France were disengaged and freed from the oath of fidelity which they had taken to him and his constitution." And so slender was his hold on the affections of his people, so feeble were his own personal resources, that this simple declaration of a body, which had for years been the abject slave of his will, the ready supporter of his most arbitrary and sanguinary measures, and could stand in no estimation with the nation, struck him at once to the ground, helpless and unresisting : there is not an instance in history of a man " armed with kings to strive," falling in a manner so inglorious and undignified.

The members of the Legislative Assembly who happened to be in Paris, followed the example of the Senate.

The Assembly had been dissolved in January, and could not meet constitutionally unless summoned by the Sovereign: this objection was, however, set aside, and the Assembly having met, ratified the act of deposition passed by the Senate. All the public functionaries, authorities, and constituted bodies, in and near Paris, hastened to send in their submission to the new powers: it was a general race in which honour was not always the prize of speed; for every address, every act of submission sent in to the new government, teemed with invectives against the deposed ruler. Hateful and unworthy as Napoleon might be, there was still something repulsive to the better feelings of our nature, in thus beholding swarms of the very persons whom his favour had raised from the dust, striving who should be the first to cast the accusing stone at him the moment he was forsaken by fortune.

And how was the late occupant of thrones engaged, while in Paris blow after blow was thus struck at the very foundation of his power? As far as we can learn, the important days of the 31st March, 1st and 2d April, were passed by the Emperor in perfect inactivity, and given up to his enemies to be used against him at their good will and pleasure; and we have seen that the valuable time was not neglected.

It was in the night between the 2d and 3d, that Caulaincourt returned from his mission, and informed Napoleon of the events which had passed. Adding, however, that in his opinion, the Allies were not yet resolved to oppose a regency; but that nothing could be done in favour of his son, till his own abdication was signed. In what manner the Emperor received these fatal tidings we are not told; interesting as it would be to see how the spoiled child of fortune bore the shock of a fall so deep and humiliating! At first it would seem

that he entertained, or affected to entertain, thoughts of resorting to arms; for in the morning he reviewed his Guard, and addressed them in the following terms:— "Officers and soldiers of my Old Guard, the enemy has gained three marches on us, and outstripped us at Paris. Some factious men, emigrants whom I had pardoned, have surrounded the Emperor Alexander; they have mounted the white cockade, and would force us to do the same. In a few days I shall attack the enemy, and force them to quit the capital. I rely on you: am I right?" The troops readily replied with loud cheers to this address, calling out "To Paris! to Paris!" but the Marshals and senior officers were by no means so zealous in the cause. The declaration of the Allies, and the decree of the Senate, had been quickly forwarded to Fontainbleau, and was already known to the army: it had produced great sensation, and a general impression that the cause of Napoleon was lost.

The Marshals and superior officers convinced of this, or tired of the endless wars that were tending rapidly to the ruin of the country, followed the Emperor to his apartments after the review; and having advised him to negotiate with the Allies, on the principle of a personal abdication, ended by informing him that they would not accompany him if he persisted in the proposed attack on Paris. The scene which followed seems to have been of a very undignified description. Napoleon was almost convulsed with rage; he tore and trampled under foot the decree of the Senate; vowed vengeance against the whole body, who should yet, he said, be made to pay for their deed of "felony;" but ended, nevertheless, by ignobly signing the abdication demanded of him. We say ignobly: for nothing can be more debasing in character, than to sink from a very tempest of passion, to a tame

submission to the cause which had called it forth! The act of abdication was worded in the following terms: "The Allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon is the sole obstacle to the re-establishment of peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares that he is ready to descend from the throne, to quit France, and even to relinquish life, for the good of the country, which is inseparable from the rights of his son, from those of the regency in the person of the Empress, and from the maintenance of the laws of the empire. Done at our Palace of Fontainbleau, 4th April 1814. "NAPOLEON."

Caulaincourt, Marshals Ney and M'Donald, were appointed to carry this conditional abdication to Paris. In passing through Essone they were joined by Marshal Marmont, who informed them that he had already, after some negotiations with Prince Schwarzenberg, sent in his submission and the submission of the senior officers of his corps to the Provisional Government; stipulating, however, that Napoleon, in case of his falling into their hands, should be suitably treated by the Allies. The shouts of "*Vive le Roi!*" which, on their arrival in Paris, greeted the ambassadors at every town, promised little for the success of their mission; but they were well received by the Emperor Alexander, who listened attentively to their warm and zealous pleading in favour of the regency. This was all, however, the Czar could do; for after the declaration issued by the Allies on the occupation of the capital, and on which so many had already acted, it was impossible for them to engage in any negotiation having the succession of the King of Rome for its object. He, therefore, told the ambassadors that "it was too late;" as the Allies were too far en-

gaged in the cause of the Senate, to negotiate with Napoleon, except on the principle of his unconditional abdication.

It has pleased the numerous class of historians always ready to charge others with the blame of Napoleon's faults, to ascribe the unfavourable result of this negotiation to the march of Marmont's corps, which at daybreak on the 5th, passed behind the lines of the Allied Army, in conformity with the convention already noticed. As the burning of Moscow occasioned the Emperor's failure in Russia; the desertion of a couple of Saxon brigades and the destruction of the bridge of Leipzig, the defeats in Saxony; the surrender of Soisson, the miscarriage of what is termed his sublime conceptions in 1814; even so, if we believe these writers, did the defection of Marmont cause his ruin at Fontainbleau! It is a painful task to be constantly forced to expose the credulity which could receive and thereby encourage such statements.

On the first day of the occupation of Paris, the Allies, who were then weak compared to what they were on the morning of the 5th when the definitive answer already quoted was given, had declared that they would not treat with Napoleon, or with any member of his family; and from the time that declaration was issued, they had been every day and hour gaining additional strength, and rendered more capable of maintaining their ground. The corps which had remained in the rear to watch Napoleon's movements, had closed up, and their army now amounted to 150,000 men. Paris, the Senate, all the constituted bodies, had taken the most decided part against the Emperor; and from the neighbouring *Communes* declarations in favour of the new order of things arrived as fast as returning couriers could bring them.

The National Guard of Paris had sided with the Provisional Government. The city was in ecstacies; the security of peace, with a general idea of approaching prosperity, pervaded all ranks; and the public funds rose 25 per cent. during the first five days of the occupation. The Allies had issued a manly and decided declaration when they were comparatively feeble: what motive could have induced them to retract it, and act a feeble part after they had gathered resistless strength?

The dread of Napoleon, who at the head of an army was at Fontainbleau ready to fall upon the capital. But had not the conditional resignation tendered by the Marshals rendered it perfectly clear that he was no longer to be dreaded? He had left St Dizier with 57,000 men; but want, sickness, fatigue, and desertion, had so thinned his ranks, that he was never able to assemble 30,000 men at Fontainbleau. If to these 20,000 men of Marmont and Mortier are added, it still gives less than 50,000 men, weak in artillery, and almost totally destitute of serviceable cavalry, to attack a victorious army thrice their own number, and as formidable in cavalry and artillery as in infantry. The French troops, it may be said, would have fought with the courage of despair. It is not even likely that any great proportion of the 50,000 men above specified would have marched against the capital. The Marshals had, as we have seen, told Napoleon that they would not join in such an attack. The decree of the Senate had reached the camp; the soldiers knew that Paris had declared against the Emperor; and to Frenchmen, the voice of Paris is the voice of an oracle: and the chances are, that finding themselves abandoned by their old leaders, aware that discord reigned among their chiefs, they would have lost the high confidence that long ren-

dered them victorious, and forsaken a cause which the nation seemed now to disown. No one will ever approve of the conduct of Marshal Marmont: as a Royalist, and as one who plainly foresaw the approaching fall of Napoleon, his submission to the Provisional Government could not perhaps be blamed; but entrusted with the command of an army by a chieftain or sovereign whom he had acknowledged, from whom he held rank and power, it was clearly his duty, as a man of honour, to have resigned that trust before he changed sides. But however reprehensible Marmont's conduct may have been, it is absolutely idle to ascribe Napoleon's ruin to his defection and to the loss of his troops. The Allies were far too strong, and too well informed of the weakness of their adversary, to have been influenced in an important resolution by the movements of a half-disorganized corps of ten thousand men.

The commissioners, on returning to Fontainbleau, found the Emperor in his cabinet, impatiently awaiting the result of their mission. Marshal Ney was the first to speak; and in that abrupt, harsh, and not very respectful tone which he had lately assumed towards his falling sovereign, told him at once, that "France, the army, and the cause of peace, demanded his unconditional abdication." Caulaincourt added, that the full sovereignty of the Isle of Elba, with a suitable establishment, had been offered by the Emperor Alexander; and Marshal M'Donald, who had so zealously defended the cause of his master, confirmed the statement,—declaring also, that, "in his opinion, the Imperial cause was completely lost, as they had all three"—the commissioners—"failed against a resolution irrevocably fixed." "What!" exclaimed Napoleon, "not only my own abdication, but that of Marie Louise, and of my

son? This is rather too much at once." And with these words he delayed the answer till next day, intending, he said, to consider the subject, and consult the army.

Had he consulted only the young and fiery Generals and old soldiers, it is possible that he might still have found men willing to share his fortunes. But the Marshals, and all the senior and influential officers, were anxious for peace; and the young conscripts could hardly feel much attachment to the man who had so lately torn them from their peaceful homes. All dispassionate observers saw clearly that his reign was past; and the Marshals, desirous of reconciling France with the rest of Europe, were unanimous in recommending an unconditional abdication. To the plans proposed by Napoleon of marching to the Loire, joining Soult and Augereau, carrying the war beyond the Alps, they would not consent; and if he really suggested such projects, as asserted by the most zealous of his admirers, it only furnishes an additional proof of his total inability to take a clear view of his position, and estimate the real elements of strength which had so long supported him.

The power of raising boundless contributions and conscriptions had formed the main sinew of his force: it had been weakened from the very commencement of the campaign, and the decree of the Senate had completely severed it. Half the empire was already in possession of the Allies, and submissions to the Provisional Government were every day pouring in from the other departments. Where then were soldiers to be raised; and where could they be trained, armed, and equipped for these distant expeditions? It is not indeed surprising that the Marshals lent a deaf ear to such proposals! The "day of the Marshals," as French writers term this

meeting, does not seem to have been of a very tranquil or dignified character: words ran high between the fallen chieftain and his former subordinates; there were altercations and painful scenes, and it was only when Napoleon had signed the following unconditional abdication that perfect calm was restored:—

"The Allied Sovereigns having declared that the Emperor Napoleon is the only obstacle to the re-establishment of a general peace, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, declares, that he renounces, for himself and his heirs, the throne of France and Italy; and that there is no personal sacrifice, not even that of life itself, which he is not willing to make for the interest of France.

"NAPOLEON.

"Fontainbleau, 6th April 1814."

This deplorable document is written in so agitated and faltering a hand as to be almost illegible; the characters are unfinished and ill-formed, some of the words are added and interlined, others underlined, as if to give them greater weight, and a heavy blot of ink marks the very centre of the paper; the whole showing clearly how destitute of firm and manly composure the writer must have been. It may, no doubt, be painful to resign crowns and sceptres; but it is exactly in the hour of adversity that dignity of character is displayed: and the darker the frowns of fortune, the heavier its blows are dealt, the brighter will be the lustre which noble and elevated bearing will cast around the brave oppressed by hostile fate. Wallenstein, defenceless and unarmed, presented his breast to the halberts of assassins, and disdained to parley even for life with slaves and stabbers. Napoleon bandied angry words with his former servants, with the very men who had crouched before him; and

at their bidding, the hand which had wielded sceptres, signed the trembling lines already quoted! History records but one fall equally ignoble, and that has yet to be related in this very Memoir. Well, indeed, might the poet ask—

> "Is this the man of thousand thrones,
> Who strewed our earth with hostile bones,
> And can he thus survive?
> Since he, miscalled the morning star,
> Nor man nor fiend has fallen so far."*

While the commissioners were negotiating with the Allies on the basis of an unconditional abdication, Napoleon is said to have contemplated a renewal of the war. After a review, at which he had been loudly cheered by the remains of his Guard, he summoned Marshal Oudinot to the Palace. "May I depend upon the fidelity of the troops?" he said. The Marshal replied in the negative, and reminded him that he had abdicated. "Ay, but under conditions," answered Napoleon. "Soldiers do not understand conditions," said the other; "they look upon your power as terminated." "Then on that side all is over," continued Napoleon: "let us wait for news from Paris."

These news were not long delayed, and were certainly of a singular complexion. According to the treaty signed at Paris on the 10th, and usually called the

* In his Diary, Lord Byron says, "Methinks Sylla did better; for he revenged and resigned in the height of his sway, red with the slaughter of his foes, the finest example of the contempt of the rascals upon record. Dioclesian did well too. Amurath not amiss, had he become ought except a Dervise. Charles V. but so, so: but Napoleon worse than all." The poet might have added, worse even than a woman, and no very respectable one either—Christina of Sweden.

Treaty of Fontainbleau, Napoleon, from being Emperor of France and King of Italy, became Emperor of Elba! He was to have a guard and navy suited to the extent of his dominions, and to receive from France a pension of six millions of francs annually. The Duchies of Parma, Placentia, and Guastala, were to be conferred in sovereignty on Marie Louise and her heirs. Two millions and a half of francs were farther to be paid annually by the French government to the Empress Josephine and other members of the Bonaparte family.

Splendid as these terms were for a dethroned and defenceless monarch, Napoleon ratified the treaty with reluctance, and delayed the signature as long as possible; still clinging, it would seem, to some vague hope of returning fortune. It is even related by Fain, Norvins, Constant, and in the pretended Memoirs of Caulaincourt, that he attempted to commit suicide by taking poison, and was only saved by the weakness of the dose, and the remedies administered by his attendants, who, hearing his groans, hastened to his bedside. It is certain, that he was very unwell on the following morning, the 13th April, a circumstance easily accounted for by the anxiety he had undergone; but there can be little difficulty in rejecting the tale of poison, for it is mentioned in none of the St Helena Memoirs, and would most assuredly have been lauded by a thousand pens, as a deed of Roman heroism, had it ever been made.

And it certainly required Christian fortitude, heathen stoicism, or a rare degree of callous apathy, to bear up against the humiliations to which Napoleon, the once mighty Emperor, was every day subjected. The Senate, following up the deposition of their late sovereign, had proclaimed Louis XVIII.; Paris had received the announcement with enthusiasm; and Napoleon had not

only the mortification to see his enemies triumphant, but to see himself abandoned by all his former friends and adherents. Nothing ever equalled the scene of baseness and tergiversation that now took place. Ministers and marshals, soldiers and civilians, all hastened to forsake the discrowned monarch, and bask in the beams of the rising sun. Such was the impatience to break all connexion with the Imperial cause, that few waited for the signature of the treaty of Fontainbleau! On the very day after Marmont's defection, Ney already sent in his submission to the new government; Victor, Oudinot, Mortier, Jourdan, Generals Kellerman, Lagrange, Milhaud, and Nansouty, all followed in rapid succession. Every hour brought tidings of fresh desertions, and even Berthier left his benefactor without bidding him farewell; till in the end Rustan the Mameluke, who had accompanied him from Egypt, and Constant, for many years his first *valet-de-chambre*, set off for Paris—the latter actually attempting, at parting, to rob his master of 100,000 francs with which he had been entrusted! Caulaincourt, and Maret duke of Bassano, were almost the only individuals who remained to the last near the person of their deposed sovereign. At the court of Blois, similar and even worse scenes took place; the public treasury was actually pillaged, and the Empress deserted as her husband had been. And so anxious was the regicide Cambacérès to make his submission to the new government, that he already despatched it in duplicate on the 7th of the month!

These desertions in the face of the world affected Napoleon deeply. "I feel mortified," he said, "that men whom I have raised so high in the eyes of Europe should sink so low. What have they made of that halo of glory through which they have hitherto been seen?

What must the sovereigns think of such a termination to all the illustrations of my reign?" The sovereigns probably thought, what most able judges of character will think even now, that any halo of glory through which these men could have been beheld, must have been a very false one. Able judges will farther add, that these desertions from a falling cause, prove clearly the indifference felt for that cause, or the selfishness of the individuals who could have joined it only from egotistical motives, and were ready, therefore, to forsake it the moment when more could be gained by changing sides. But the shame of all this baseness recoils entirely on the actors; it forms no general trait of our nature: for no really great man or noble cause could have been deserted in this manner. A truly great man will easily find those endued with high character and talents ready to support him in the career he may follow, and will not be forsaken on the first turn of fortune. But from these desertions, it would seem that Napoleon possessed neither the skill to choose nor the gift of attaching men to his person. As long as he had the spoils of Europe to serve as rewards, he had brave, daring, and zealous followers in abundance, as all will have with similar advantages; but when abandoned by success, we find him left without a single friend: and we can never think so meanly of human nature, as to suppose that a really great man could have been left so destitute.

Marie Louise and her son returned to the protection of the Emperor of Austria; and so deserted was her court, that she had not, at the last moment, a single dignitary of state or household officer of rank, to hand her to her carriage!

The different members of the Bonaparte family sought shelter, some in Italy and others in Switzerland: their

rapacity and the anxiety they all evinced to reduce every thing to money, even before they left Paris, may be read at length in Capefigue, and only belongs in so far to our subject, as it tends to illustrate the base and demoralising influence which Napoleon's sway exercised on the highest of his subordinates, and made the very men who had acted the part of Kings and Princes grapple at last for base coin.

As we are here closing an important act of our drama, it may be right to mention, that the Empress Josephine did not long survive the dethronement of her former husband. She had fled from Paris on the approach of the Allies, but returned to Malmaison after the surrender of the capital. The Emperor Alexander treated her with great attention ; a circumstance that is said to have displeased Napoleon. She died of an inflammation of the throat before the Allies left France. Napoleon lingered long enough at Fontainbleau to hear of the Count d'Artois' triumphant entrance into Paris. It was with evident reluctance that he tore himself away from the army, and from all hopes of returning fortune ; and threatened even, at the last moment, to renew the war, as the Allies, he said, had prevented the Empress from joining him.

But, like so many others, this also remained a threat, and every thing being ready, the 20th of April was fixed upon for his departure. At noon, the fallen "Child of Destiny," leaning on the arm of General Belliard, descended the great stair of the antique palace of Fontainbleau ; he looked bloated and unwell, but advanced with a quick step into the centre of the Old Guard, which was drawn up to receive him. Amidst profound silence he addressed them in the following words :—"Soldiers of my Old Guard, I bid you farewell! During twenty

years I have ever found you in the path of honour and of glory. The Allied powers have armed all Europe against me ; part of the army has betrayed its duty, and France has resigned herself to other interests. With you and the other brave men who have remained faithful to me, I could have maintained a civil war for three years ; but France would have been rendered unhappy, and this would have been contrary to the object I have proposed to myself. It was, therefore, my duty to sacrifice my personal interest to the honour of the country, and I have done so. Continue to serve your new sovereign as faithfully as you have served me : do not lament my fate : I could have died, nothing was easier ; but I shall always follow the paths of honour, and shall describe the great deeds we have performed together. Farewell, my children ! I wish I could press you all to my heart ; but I will at least press your eagle." At these words, General Petit advanced with the eagle. Napoleon took him in his arms and kissed the standard ; and then saying, " Adieu once more, my old comrades ; may this last embrace penetrate the hearts of the brave!" he hurried to his carriage, and drove rapidly from a scene which must be judged of according to the estimate the reader may form of the character of the principal actors.

Four commissioners, one from each of the great Allied powers, General Köller on the part of Austria, General Schouvalow on that of Russia, Colonel Campbell on that of England, and Count Waldburg Truchsess on behalf of Prussia, accompanied the discrowned Emperor on his journey. Count Bertrand attended him as Grand Master of the palace ; other officers of minor note were also of the party ; and while fourteen carriages were conveying him and his immediate suite towards Elba, 400 infantry and 150 cavalry, all volunteers from the

Old Guard, marched in the same direction, to take on them the military duties of the new Empire.

Napoleon had refused an escort of Allied troops, declaring that he had nothing to apprehend from his late subjects; and during the earlier part of his progress, and while the journey lay through districts still partly occupied by French soldiers, he was respectfully received by the authorities, and with occasional shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* and other tokens of sympathy by the people; and he did not fail to point these out to the commissioners as proofs of his popularity: they were not to be of long duration.

Near Valence he accidentally met Marshal Augereau; both alighted from their carriages, and the Emperor, taking off his hat, advanced and embraced his former comrade, who returned the embrace indeed, but without removing his travelling-cap. After walking together for a quarter of an hour along the road, they parted as they had met; the Emperor again taking off his hat, Augereau remaining covered. The Marshal, on passing, bowed very politely to the commissioners, but cast at the same time a more than contemptuous wave of the hand towards his former sovereign. On the 16th April Augereau, in acknowledging the Bourbons, had issued a proclamation highly insulting to Napoleon, who had not known, it was said, "to die as a soldier after sacrificing millions to his ambition." An hour after the meeting here described, Napoleon said to General Köller, "I have this instant heard of Augereau's proclamation; had I been sooner acquainted with it, I should have given it him well:"—*Je lui aurais bien lavé la tête.* The General assures us that he had heard of it long before, which is hardly to be doubted, as it was then a week old. But more humiliating scenes were still to follow.

Near Lyons, feelings hostile to the fallen chief had already shown themselves, and these augmented rapidly as the travellers advanced. "Perish the tyrant!" "Down with the butcher of our children!" were the cries now most frequently heard: at one place he beheld himself gibbeted in effigy; and at Avignon, the exertions of the commissioners alone saved him from the fury of the populace. Similar dangers attended him as he proceeded; and the craven fear he evinced could never have been credited had there been any possibility of doubting the authority on which it is related.* The Ex-Emperor of France, the leader of mighty armies, actually disguised himself, sometimes as a courier, sometimes as a servant; ordered domestics to smoke in his presence, and invited the commissioners to sing or whistle, that the incensed multitude might not be aware who was in the carriage. At Orgon the mob paraded his own effigy daubed with blood, and stopped his carriage till they displayed it before his eyes. From Avignon to La Calade, he was grossly insulted in every town and village, and would certainly have been torn to pieces by enraged multitudes, had not the efforts of the commissioners, aided occasionally by local authorities, protected him from their fury. At La Calade the mob surrounded the house, and with loud execrations demanded his head; and it was only by getting out of a back window, and riding the next post in the disguise of a courier, and with the white cockade in his hat, that he effected his escape.

This reception from the people he had so long governed, affected him deeply; he shed tears, and showed a want of firmness which astonished all who witnessed it. But

* Count Waldburg Truchsess, Itinéraire de Napoleon Bonaparte de Fontainbleau a Frejus.

civil commotions "were never, it is said," so calmly contemplated by Napoleon as the tumults of the field; and Sir Walter Scott tells us, that "the bravest soldier might shudder at a death like that of De Witt." All this, though perfectly true, will not clear Napoleon from the want of firmness evidently displayed on these occasions. In ordinary cases, the bravest soldier who enters the battle-field is not indifferent to danger: he would rather escape death and wounds than otherwise; but he does not, on that account, shrink down to the very craven. The man of nerve, mind and heart—of real bravery in fact, smiles in danger stern and wild; faces death itself unmoved; and if he falls, falls with the dignity that, like Cæsar's mantle, lends a grace to the last throb of life. Exterior apparent calmness in battle, is not always a proof of the highest order of courage: for we may well suppose, that of the myriads of soldiers who engage in modern combats, there must necessarily be many who are not endued with much nerve; and those can have seen little of war, who have not at times observed an evident want of firmness and power of decided action, where there was no attempt to fly or shrink from danger. And where the mass of soldiers can show this description of nerve, the General, and above all the General of a very large army, who is exposed to far less danger, may easily pass muster with a vastly inferior share of animal courage.

"Frederick the Great from Molwitz deigned to run." At Collin he left the field before the battle was irretrievably lost, and at Soor a feeble moment again came over him; but we know from Berenhorst, the ablest of all the authorities who have spoken of him, that he was never in the least discomposed by the passing sound of cannon-

shot, and several times rode into the very thickest fire of musketry, when he thought circumstances called upon him for peculiar exertions; and yet he never, perhaps, obtained a fair reputation for bravery. In battle, thousands share danger together, and the comparatively feeble are strengthened in resolve by the presence of the strong and the hardy, animated and encouraged by the fire and example of the valiant and the brave. All these excitements which support the middling character, fall away in scenes like those we have just described. There, danger singles out its individual victim, forces him to stand alone on his own ground, and to meet peril front to front: and it is under such circumstances that the higher order of courage is tried; and when so tried, we see that Napoleon's courage was found wanting.

After the tears shed at La Calade, he spoke on the road of the plans he had formed for attacking the King of Sardinia, and removing Murat from the throne of Naples: schoolboy-like, shedding tears one moment and building airy castles in the next. At Luc he had an interview with his sister Pauline. When this lady, who was not without some elevation of character, first heard of the events at Paris, she exclaimed, "Oh, then, my brother is dead!" On being assured that he was in perfect health, "How!" she said, "could he survive all this? The last is even the worst news you have brought me."

At Aix, precautions were taken to secure the rest of his journey by detachments of Allied troops; and on the 27th he arrived at Frejus, the very port where, on his return from Egypt, he had landed fourteen years before, when about to assume the reins of an empire destined for a time to overshadow Europe by its might, and oppress it by the weight of its chains.

A French vessel had been sent round from Toulon,

for the purpose of conveying him to Elba; but there happened to be an English frigate also in the roads, and he preferred sailing under any flag rather than that of the Bourbons. At eleven o'clock on the night of the 28th, he embarked on board the *Undaunted*, under a salute of twenty-one guns. "Adieu, Cæsar and his fortune!" said the Russian commissioner, as the bark left the land; but the farewell was premature, for the "bastard Cæsar" was to try fortune once more.

Napoleon's equanimity seemed perfectly re-established from the moment he set his foot on the British deck. He conversed affably with Captain Usher and the officers; and by the ease and plainness of his manners, his curiosity regarding the arrangements of the ship, and the warm eulogies which he continued to pronounce on them, and on the character of the English nation, he easily succeeded in making a very favourable impression on the whole crew. The English are naturally a forgiving and warm-hearted people; and a vanquished enemy, arriving as an unarmed guest among them—a fallen Emperor, who had occupied the mightiest throne in Europe, seeking anxiously to please and win golden opinions from all men, could hardly fail to gain the good will of frank and open-hearted sailors. The only person on whom these Imperial blandishments made no impression was Hinton the boatswain: this shrewd old tar was not so easily gained over as his comrades, and usually growled out the homely phrase "Humbug," in reply to all the fine speeches made in the Emperor's praise. Saving this hard veteran, the language of the forecastle declared Bonaparte to be "a very good fellow after all." And when, on leaving the ship, he caused some 200 *Napoleons* to be distributed among the sailors, even Hinton relented; and in returning thanks for the

crew, "wished his honour long life, and better luck next time."

On the 4th May, the Emperor came in sight of his new dominions, and went on shore in disguise the same evening, to ascertain for himself, whether the feelings of the Elbese at all resembled those of the Provençals. Finding that, on the contrary, the people considered his residence as likely to increase the prosperity of their island, he returned on board, and at noon next day made his public entrance into the town of Porto Ferrajo amidst all possible demonstrations of welcome and respect.

The Island of Elba, to the limits of which Napoleon's empire was now reduced, is situated on the coast of Tuscany, and has a circumference of sixty miles. The country is mountainous, romantic in appearance, and the air, except in the neighbourhood of the salt marshes, considered pure and healthy. It produces little grain; but exports some wine and a considerable quantity of iron ore; minerals forming the principal wealth of the island.

Napoleon entered at first with all possible zeal on the administration of his new dominions. "I am politically dead to Europe," he said; "let me do all I can for Elba:" and certainly no small sovereignty was ever so much governed in so short a time. In less than three weeks he had explored every corner of the island, and projected more improvements than a single life could have completed. He even extended his empire by sending some twenty soldiers to take possession of a small adjacent island, hitherto left unoccupied for fear of Corsairs: observing, at the same time, that "Europe would say he had already made a conquest." He established four different residences at different corners

of Elba, and was continually in motion from one to another of them. Wherever he was, in houses neither so large nor so well furnished as many English gentlemen are used to inhabit, the etiquette of the Tuileries was maintained with all practicable strictness. And his few hundred veterans were as frequently and as formally reviewed as if they had been the armies of Austerlitz and Moscow.

His presence, however, gave a strong stimulus to the trade and navigation of the island; the harbour of Porto Ferrajo was crowded with vessels from the opposite coast of Italy, and the new flag of Elba spangled with bees, already began to be known on the Mediterranean. Numerous strangers, and among them many Englishmen of rank, also visited the island. They were always received with great courtesy by the Emperor, who, on such occasions, spoke very freely of his former government; and in conversation palliated rather than denied the scheme of poisoning the sick, the massacre of Jaffa, and the murder of the Duke d'Enghien. Of himself he always spoke as of one who was politically dead; declaring, that he intended to devote himself exclusively to literature and science; though there is not the least appearance that he ever paid the slightest attention to either subject during his ten months' stay at Elba. Of the English character he frequently expressed the greatest admiration. "The English are the only people in the world," he said; "the rest are only so many populaces. I tried to elevate the French to your level of sentiment, and failing to do so, fell of course."

He was, more from political motives, perhaps, than from attachment to Marie Louise, greatly displeased with the Emperor of Austria for having caused his separation from his wife and child, and often reproached

General Köller with the conduct of his government. The commissioner could only parry these attacks, by declaring what, indeed, was perfectly true, that the separation was owing entirely to the Empress's own desire; hinting sometimes that Napoleon's anxiety for her return resulted from other rather than motives of conjugal affection; insinuations to which his irregularities gave sufficient colouring.

These differences did not, however, prevent Napoleon from expressing great friendship for the General; and when the latter, who was a shrewd and able man, came to take his final leave, the parting between them was, says Sir Walter Scott, "quite pathetic on the Emperor's side. He wept as he embraced the General, and entreated him to obtain, if possible, his reunion with his wife and child: called him the preserver of his life; regretted his poverty, which prevented his bestowing on him some valuable token of remembrance; finally, folding the Austrian in his arms, he held him there for some time, repeating expressions of the warmest attachment." This sensibility existed all upon one side; for an English gentleman who witnessed the scene, afterwards asked Köller what he was thinking of while locked in the Emperor's embrace,—"Of Judas Iscariot," answered the witty Austrian.

As time wore, it became evident, that Napoleon's mind wanted the calmness which could enable him to rest upon his own resources. The Ex-Emperor was essentially, indeed, a man of action, and not of thought; and his activity had more the character of restlessness than of the persevering efforts to carry great, clear, and well-defined projects into rapid execution. Thrown into a subordinate situation, he would have been a troublesome landlord meddling with his tenants, or a martinet

Colonel drilling and parading his troops without object from morning to night. Hitherto crowns and sceptres had been his playthings, and the astonishment of the great nations of the earth had formed the food of his vanity: now the Isle of Elba was to be his stage, its police and fiscal regulations were to engross the interest which had for years been bestowed only on the command of armies and the government of empires; and the building of villas was to satisfy the craving for excitement so long fed by the raising and remodelling of thrones—

> "The triumph and the vanity,
> The rapture of the strife,
> The earthquake voice of victory
> To him the breath of life;
> The sword, the sceptre, and the sway,
> That man seemed born but to obey"—

were now all quelled, and Napoleon was nothing without them. He could not cultivate his garden like Dioclesian, nor follow the example of Frederick II., who ended his days in the philosophic retreat of San-Souci, dreading the very name of war. When the first novelty of his island reign was over, when he had explored every corner of his new empire, and projected improvements that far exceeded his pecuniary means, he became dejected, moody, listless, and comparatively difficult of access.

The want of money also began to press upon him, and checked his architectural plans and other improvements. The taxes were consequently augmented; and as the islanders were poor and unable to pay the new imposts, troops were quartered on the refractory, as had been usual in conquered countries, and the new ruler's popu-

larity was soon on the decline. Had the French government paid his pension in advance, or quarterly as it fell due, it would still have borne a slender proportion to the demands of his extravagant expenditure. But he received no money whatever from the Bourbon Court; and his complaints on this head were most unjustly and unwisely neglected. Sir Neil Campbell represented to the British government the danger of leaving Napoleon exposed to these difficulties; and Lord Castlereagh very properly called the attention of the French Cabinet to the consequences that might result; but they treated the matter lightly, and declared the Emperor's pension was not due till the end of the year; by which time he had already taken steps to pay himself.

As the winter drew towards an end, Sir Neil Campbell, who was now the only commissioner at Elba, saw clearly that some enterprise was in agitation, and warned the government in consequence. This officer, having no acknowledged diplomatic character, was gradually excluded from the presence of the Emperor, who shrouded himself within forms of etiquette; but he was not able to deceive Sir Neil by these contrivances. Porto Ferrajo resembled a large barrack filled with military, *gens d'armes*, police-officers; refugees of every nation, expectants and dependants upon the court, domestics and adventurers, all connected with the Emperor, holding or anticipating some benefit at his hands. Suspicious characters appeared and disappeared again; and rumours of every kind, says Sir Walter Scott, were buzzed about through this miscellaneous crowd, "thick as motes in sunshine." But though these appearances may have rendered it evident that some project was agitated at Elba, nothing has yet transpired to show that they were connected with any plot or conspiracy

formed for the Emperor's recall, either in France or Italy. His friends laboured, no doubt, to bring about such a result, and by a strange fatality, his enemies also lent their best efforts to the same cause.

Printed Works which have served as authority for the statements contained in this Book.

THIBAUDEAU, HISTOIRE DE FRANCE ET DE NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, &c., &c.

CAPEFIGUE, L'EUROPE PENDANT LE CONSULAT ET L'EMPIRE DE NAPOLEON.

The latter is good authority on some of the events mentioned in the present as well as in the last Book, the author having derived his information from Prince Metternich.

CAPEFIGUE, HISTOIRE DE LA RESTORATION.

Written in a soberer and less affected style than the previous work; and good authority on many points of fact, though strongly marked with the political feelings of the writer.

BARON FAIN, MANUSCRIT DE 1814.

Less interesting than the manuscript of 1813, and as shown in the narrative, not always to be depended upon.

NORVINS, HISTOIRE DE NAPOLEON.

KOCH, MEMOIRES POUR SERVIR A L'HISTOIRE DE LA CAMPAGNE DE 1814.

An average French history.

GENERAL VAUDONCOURT, HISTOIRE DE LA CAMPAGNE DE 1814 ET 1815.

On a par with the same author's account of the campaign of 1813.

JOMINI, VIE POLITIQUE ET MILITAIRE DE NAPOLEON.

As already mentioned.

ALISON'S HISTORY OF EUROPE, &c., &c.

May be considered an authentic source of history regarding some of the events mentioned in this as well as in the former Book, the author having received his information direct from the late Earl Cathcart.

LORD BURGHERSH'S MEMOIR OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814.

His Lordship having been present with the army during the campaign, and certain, from his rank and station, to obtain good information, gives authority to his work, which bears, besides, a marked impress of talent.

GERMAN WORKS.

GENERAL GROLMAN, HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE EAST AND THE NORTH OF FRANCE, 1814.

The author held a high situation on the staff of Marshal Blücher, and had, consequently, good opportunities of obtaining information. The work is in four large volumes, and enters, therefore, into the most minute details. It is a valuable source of history; though not, perhaps, written in a very popular style.

C. *v.* W., (GENERAL MUFFLING,) CAMPAIGNS OF THE SILESIAN ARMY IN 1813 AND 1814.

As formerly mentioned.

GENERAL CLAUSEWITZ.

The posthumous works of this distinguished writer contain a brief sketch of the campaign of 1814, an outline intended, perhaps, to have been filled up at a future time.

MICHAILOFSKY DANILEFSKY.

As formerly mentioned. The original work is in the Russian language, and the present writer judges of it only from the Ger-

man translation, which avows no predilection for the views of the author.

AUSTRIAN MILITARY JOURNAL. The volumes for the years 1836, 1837-1838, 1839-1840.

Contain a series of highly interesting articles written by Major Schels. The author, whose name holds a distinguished rank in German literature, was on the staff at the head-quarters of Prince Schwarzenberg's army, and had there, as he has since had, the best means of obtaining accurate information.

VARNHAGEN VON ENSE, LIFE OF BLUCHER.

Already mentioned.

PROKESCH, LIFE OF FIELD-MARSHAL PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG.

Less interesting than might have been expected; but containing some letters of the Prince highly creditable to his character.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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